

# THE SMART SET

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CLEVERNESS

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# ROSEBUD'S GRANDPAPA

By the Baroness von Hutten

“DEAR lady, lived somewhere beyond Boston; the pie-for-breakfast sort, you know.”

Bijou Mott looked around for approval, and Mrs. Clarke answered his appeal with a soul-satisfying shriek.

“Fancy Ned Peele’s ever having had an aunt who ate pie for breakfast!”

“Fancy his ever having had an aunt at all!”

“The funniest of all is to fancy the poor lamb’s having any money at all.”

Lady Arkney carefully patted her intricate curls and frizzes. “Was he poor, then?” she asked.

Lulu Clarke laughed again. “As poor as a church mouse, my dear.”

“Did pretty well for a mouse, didn’t he, though, Lulu?”

“Must have been a bat—winged mouse, you see!”

“You are abominably silly, Bijou; drink your tea, and hold your peace.”

“Peace—when you are beside me, queen of my soul?”

Lady Arkney watched them, curiously. “You Americans are so fresh,” she said, at length. “You do say such ripplin’ things to one another. Fancy, ‘queen of my soul’!”

“Perhaps, you mean that I have no soul?” asked Bijou, inspired to further brilliance by her ladyship’s admiration.

Every one laughed. It is the proper thing to do when Bijou Mott has made a joke, and the approval of an English countess makes the task easier.

It was six o’clock, and the sea, stretching before them, was an undulating sheet of gold; to the left, the cliffs, rising sheer out of the deep

water, presented a wonderful study in color and shadow.

These things, however, no one noticed. The octagon, a large, open room, built upon one corner of Sea View, was so much more interesting, with its four occupants, and its tea and ices.

Lulu Clarke, who, as a rule, was spoken of as the beautiful Mrs. Clarke, to distinguish her from her sister-in-law, the good Mrs. Clarke, leaned back in her much-cushioned chair, and played with her gold teaspoon; Lady Arkney—the frankness of the rouge and white on her weather-beaten skin betokened a certain strength of character—had crossed her legs, and was apparently interested in the pattern of her openwork stockings. The two men, O’Hara and Bijou Mott, watched the women.

“Oh, I’ve always forgotten to ask you, Mr. O’Hara, why do some people call you ‘count’?”

Lady Arkney’s sudden remark doubled up Bijou, and brought a flush to the cheek of the elder man.

“I *am* a count, Lady Arkney. The Holy Father gave me the title—in— in return for some slight services I was able to render him.”

She looked at him, meditatively. “Now, what does the man mean?” she asked. “‘The Holy Father.’ We used to call Gladstone ‘Holy Moses.’”

Bijou shouted.

“Count O’Hara means the Pope, Nell,” put in Lulu, who was rather good-natured, at times.

“Oh, I see. Not goin’, are you?”

O’Hara had risen. “I fear I must. I promised Mrs. Harry Wolcott to drop

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in for a few minutes. She wants to talk her cotillon over with me."

With two rather stiff bows, he withdrew, and, as the door closed behind him, Bijou again burst into loud laughter. "Oh, let's shriek with delight. Lady Arkney, you are adorable!"

Lady Arkney cheerfully joined in the chorus of shrieks, and, when it had died away, asked for the key to it.

Mrs. Clarke was on the point of answering when the door opened, and a tall woman, enveloped in a dust-coat, entered unannounced.

"Hello, peeps," she called, as she approached, and then, having formally greeted Lady Arkney, she dropped into a chair, and asked for a restorative.

"Tea?" inquired Mrs. Clarke.

"Tea. I wish cocktails weren't so common, for I'd like one, awfully."

"Cocktails common? Dear me, they are quite the thing at home!" And Lady Arkney's eyebrows climbed appealingly into her hair.

"Of course, they are," agreed Maud Wolcott; "that's the advantage of being English. People in Camden and Kentish Town don't drink 'em yet, do they? Well, they are drunk all through the West, already, here!"

Mrs. Clarke made the tea and handed it to her exhausted guest, while Bijou administered to that weary giantess what he called a tear of neat whiskey.

"I'm dead, children," Mrs. Wolcott began, when she was somewhat restored. "I've been singing to the 'incurables,' and they do take it out of me so!"

"Then, why do it?" asked little Bijou. "Horrid things!"

"The dowager insists—you know the dowager!"

"Don't I! Sometimes, I wish I didn't. I say, Maud, why is she so down on me of late?"

Maud laughed. "Isn't. She despises you with a nice, comfy, O-Lord-I-thank-Thee! despisement; but, at the same time, she has a weakness for you."

"Oh, is that it?" He stretched out a long, well-cared-for hand, and,

taking a lump of sugar from the little gold bowl, nibbled at it, with relish.

"By the way, Maud, we're all awfully glad about your father," exclaimed Lulu Clarke, suddenly.

"Oh, yes. Isn't it dinty?"

"I suppose, *en famille*, we may ask you whether wealth will pour into your coffers, too?"

Maud shook her head. "Oh, no; I don't think so."

"Surely, he won't give it all to Van?"

"Van won't get a cent; that's settled. Aunt Amanda didn't admire Van, and, as she expressed her wishes very forcibly in her will, papa can do nothing but submit."

"Submit! I wish such a trial would be sent to this child," observed Bijou.

"So do I. I'd like to see what you'd do with it. It really is rather amusing, though, isn't it? At papa's age, to inherit a fortune!"

"At papa's age! He'd be pleased, wouldn't he?"

"He's forty-six, my dear."

"And is it true that it's really over two millions?" pursued Lulu, curiously.

"Yes. He's promised me a necklace as a souvenir.

"Glitter, glitter, little stones,  
On our Maudie's lovely neck;  
Luckily, there are no bones—

What rhymes with 'neck'? I could compose so sweetly, if verses didn't have to rhyme."

Mrs. Wolcott rose.

"Gibber, gibber, little goose,  
No one listens—what's the use?

Well, I must be off. By the way, have you seen Jim O'Hara? I've a date with him——"

"Better go home to keep it, then; he's just left us. Said he was going to look in on you."

When Maud had gone, Lady Arkney observed: "What a pity you Americans are so thin! Now, she's a rippin' good-looker, only, she runs so to bone. No figger at all, has she?"

The sun was going down in a glory;



a sail-boat skimmed crossways over the bay.

"You must go now, Bijou; we're dining at Barney's, with Ned Peele, and wish to dress."

"All right, I'll toddle. Ain't I a good-and-plenty boy? *Au 'voir.*"

The two women went in a few minutes later, and up to their rooms. On the landing, Lady Arkney paused.

"Awfully amusin', little what's-his-name, isn't it?"

Lulu had seen a great deal of Bijou in the last few years, and, secretly, she found him rather tiresome. Lady Arkney's approval, however, gave him a certain cachet.

"Yes, isn't he?" she returned, warmly. "Sometimes, he's excruciatingly funny."

## II

MAUD WOLCOTT, meanwhile, had driven home, seen O'Hara, and gone up to her nursery.

"Oh, madame," cried the French nurse, as she entered, "it is an angel—but an angel! She ran all alone across the room *il y a* one instant!"

The angel, a very pretty child of nearly two, sat on a woolly white rug, busily licking the paint off a little red cart.

Mrs. Wolcott knelt down and, catching her up, kissed her. "Mammy's precious! Mammy's *Leckerbissen!* Mammy's *petit chou!*"

Rosebud smiled, and rubbed the red paint from her mouth into her mother's lawn sleeve.

"It is of an intelligence, madame—I, who tell you, never saw so young a child with such a—a—*esprit.* *Monsieur le grandpapa* was here, and it was an idyl to see them. Such a handsome, young-looking gentleman, madame, if madame permits!"

"Rosebud, my sweetness, waz-zum's grandpapa a handsome gentleman? Diddums love um's grandpapa?"

"Diddums are. Diddums is a sweetness—mouse—and loves um's

venerable ancestor all to piece-ums!" answered a voice from the doorway.

Maud turned, laughing. "Wretched old parent! Come in and tell me if this isn't the very sweetest girl in the world."

"Izzums," agreed Mr. Peele, gravely. "Give the old man a kiss, Miss Baby!"

The child obeyed, putting her little arms about his neck, and rumpling his thick hair with delight.

"Mustn't spoil the V. A.'s toilette. V. A. is going out."

"Where?" asked Maud, carelessly.

"To Barney's. I have a small dinner there."

She turned. "Oh, have you? Whom?"

"Lulu Clarke and her English-woman, de Pouence, Evelyn and Van, and the Bordens."

"Why didn't you ask us?"

He laughed. "Didn't want you, my dear. Well, good-bye. Good-bye, sweetheart."

Kissing the child, he put her down and went out, whistling. As he disappeared, Rosebud tied her small face into a double bow-knot, and gave vent to a hideous yell.

Peele came running back. "What on earth is the matter?" he cried.

"*C'est qu'elle ne veut pas que monsieur s'en aille,*" explained the nurse, proudly.

He took the child again, quieted her, promised to come back the following day, and then he and his daughter went down-stairs together.

"It's funny how devoted she is to you, papa," Maud began, turning on the electric light on the landing.

"Most natural thing in the world, my dear. I am her grandfather, a very charming man, and then—I have a fortune to leave," he added, a little maliciously.

"How horrid of you, papa! However, as you *can't* leave it to Van, I suppose you will, in the end, leave it to her."

He laughed. "Unless I marry!"

"Papa!"

He turned, and, taking both her

hands, held them close, looking into her eyes as he spoke.

"*Pax vobiscum*, daughter o' mine; I assure you, I have no intention of marrying. But I make no promises, mind you. I am comparatively a young man, and I have very good health. Suppose you allow me to enjoy my own money for a time, before you dispose of it!"

She was uneasy, but she was not a coward.

"All this is what Lady Arkney calls 'rot,' isn't it? Knowing to whom one is going to leave one's money is not signing one's death warrant, is it? I hope not, for both Harry and I have made our wills. What time is your dinner?"

"Eight. Good-bye. Tell Harry I'll see him to-morrow about that launch."

He went out, whistling, and she walked slowly to her room.

### III

BARNEY stood at his door, smoking a very good cigar and looking out for those whom he considered his guests, though a round sum in coin of the republic was to be paid him for their entertainment. Before him stretched the little street, with its ill-built shops and its muddy road. To his right and left were the windows of his own place, brilliantly lighted, but displaying nothing more tempting than several glass dishes of unattractive candy, covered with small squares of pink mosquito netting; and a basket of seaweed, in which were hidden lobsters, crabs and other deep-sea charmers.

To look at the place and its owner, an outsider would have thought it a third-rate restaurant; but, then, Barney cared nothing for outsiders, and had nothing to do with them. These unfortunate beings could penetrate to the innermost circles of the Casino, of the Wassita Club, or even to the White-and-Gold Room of the Continental, but Barney would not receive them.

"Yes, oh, yes, I believe ye," he said, on one occasion, to a misguided be-

liever in the power of gold; "but I don't know ye. Oh, did ye dine here on Toosday? Well, Mr. Clyde can invite any one he sees fit to, and I s'pose *he* knows ye. Yes, goo'-bye."

Rooms at Barney's—there are only two—must be engaged weeks ahead, and, if Barney could be persuaded to give his list of customers to some aspiring outer barbarian, she would make no mistakes in her invitations.

Barney's mind was at rest—for he had paid his last visit to the kitchen, and found everything as he wished it; and his wife, to whose supposed eighth of black blood many people attributed her wonderful achievements in certain culinary directions, was full of the quiet enthusiasm of the artiste on the point of a great success.

Now, before the guests arrived, Barney was enjoying a sniff of evening air, and a cigar that the Grand Duke Boleslav, of Poland, had given him the week before.

When Mrs. Clarke's brougham drew up at the door, he threw away the rest of his Habana, and, going forward, helped the two ladies to alight.

"G'd evening," he said, politely; "cart before the horse this time—Mr. Peele hasn't come yet."

Lady Arkney looked at him, curiously. This was really an American experience.

Lulu laughed. "Never mind, Barney; he'll come soon, for we're just on time. I shouldn't dare come *here* late!"

"Why not?" asked the Englishwoman, looking with astonishment at the shabby little shop through which they were passing.

"Barney hates people to be late, and it does spoil the dinner, you know."

"You're Barney, I suppose?"

"I am, madam. Let me help you with that cape, Mis' Clarke—the hook's caught in your hair."

With skilful fingers, he disentangled the lock, and then hung the long white velvet cloak on a painted pine peg—one of about twenty.

"Good dinner to-night, I hope?" asked Lulu, briskly, looking in the

glass, and giving her cheeks a sharp nip with finger and thumb.

"So-so. Who's coming? Mr. Peele telephoned his order, so I don't know."

His eyes, unimpressed, rested lazily on the gorgeous figure of the Englishwoman, as she rearranged the diamonds in her hair.

"Here's Mr. Peele; he'll tell us."

Peele came in, a little out of breath, his light coat open, a white flower in his button-hole.

"A thousand pardons!" he cried, as he shook hands with them and then with Barney, who remained a meditative spectator of the scene. "I had to stop and quiet my granddaughter; she was afflicted with a sudden inability to bear my departure."

Lady Arkney stared. "Your granddaughter!"

"Yes. Is it possible you do not know about her? She is a most attractive child, isn't she, Lulu?"

Lulu nodded. "I hate babies, myself; but every one seems rather mad about Rosebud. She's certainly very pretty."

The other guests arrived almost together: Raoul de Pouence, who was on his third visit to Barport, declaring that the place was his ideal of the Mohammedan's paradise, with nothing to do and no end of beautiful women; Mr. and Mrs. Sam Borden, who had, so to say, ridden their way into society, she being the best horsewoman in America; Van Buren Peele, the only son of his father, a slight man of five-and-twenty, extraordinarily graceful in spite of his curious, hesitating manner. With Van came the girl to whom he was engaged, Evelyn Quincy, a dark-haired, dark-eyed woman of his own age, who, owing to an unusual degree of near-sightedness, looked at the world through a short-handled gold lorgnon, and, finding it a fairly amusing sight, often wore a queer little half-smile on her pink lips.

De Pouence, who always expected to be asked to meet the handsomest women afforded by the place he honored with his presence, looked around him with a smile of contentment.

Lulu Clarke, in a bright-green gown, with emeralds in her hair, was gorgeous. Mrs. Borden, in spite of her crooked nose, possessed great charm; Lady Arkney was what she herself called very smart, and the Frenchman was more or less in love with Evelyn Quincy, who, being engaged and twenty-five, was almost as good as married.

Lady Arkney, as the party sat down, looked around the room with delight, nothing of its simplicity escaping her. "Isn't this sonsy!" she exclaimed, misusing a good old Scotch word. "Is it whitewash on the walls?"

"Kalsomine," returned Peele. "And aren't the curtains lovely?"

Borden was telling Lulu that she was a dream; de Pouence watched Miss Quincy, in eloquent silence, which she broke by saying, impatiently, "*Pas de blague*, please."

By all that was holy, he wasn't blagging. He never blagged. Moreover, he hadn't said a word, so what did she mean?

Van Buren Peele gave Mrs. Borden a glowing account of Bristed Cooper's new stables, in which every horse had a night- and a day-stall, while they were fitted with electric lights and decorated in marble.

"Busts, you know, of all the prize-winners he's ever had. I wish you could see them. Bad Penny is bound to lift the Derby next year."

"English or American?" she asked, leaning both elbows on the table, and playing with a rose. She wore no rings, for her hands were remarkably beautiful—an inheritance, she said, from her great-great-grandfather, of whom nothing further was known.

Van Peele laughed. "The English, of course. Cooper didn't mind sending his horses to England, but he'd shy at Chicago."

The father watched his son speaking, and then, raising his voice a little, he asked Miss Quincy what she had been about since he had seen her last.

"Rubbishing," she answered, with promptness; "nothing worth remembering. And you?"

"I've been in New York. I saw

Betty Squires, and she sent you her love."

"Ah, Betty!"

The girl dropped her lorgnon, and her smile changed a little.

"Does she begin to look sorry?" It was Van who spoke.

"Not a bit; looked as sweet as a peach, and invited me to dine with them. I couldn't go, unfortunately."

"I have a horror of dining in tiny flats, where the maid disarranges one's hair in passing," put in Mrs. Borden.

"Have you? I like it—at least, when it's Betty's maid who does it. I love Betty."

Lulu smiled, gaily, at her opposite neighbor.

"Oh, so do I love her."

"So do I," drawled Van.

"So do I!" agreed the others, in chorus.

"The fact remains, however, that she and Billy married on nothing a year, and that they must be awfully hard up."

Van Peele spoke very slowly, and, when he had finished, he drained his wine-glass.

His father frowned, and then, with a laugh, returned: "Few people know how comfortable one can be on—nothing a year."

"Even an oyster may be crossed in love," answered Mrs. Clarke. "By the way," she added, in an undertone, turning to Peele, "is one allowed to congratulate you, Ned?"

"You are."

"Then, I do. I don't know any one to whom I'd rather have had it happen."

"Thanks, Lulu. It is very nice, but—it comes a few years too late, my dear."

She laughed. "Nonsense! You are, by all odds, the most attractive man in New York, to say nothing of outer darkness."

"I'm forty-six, and a grandfather. It is a somewhat ironical arrangement of Providence, when one thinks of it."

"Maud told me about it this afternoon."

"Oh, did she?" he returned, with a

smile that just stirred his dark mustache.

Lady Arkney was delighted with everything, and, when Barney himself came in and accompanied the pouring of the champagne with a series of nonchalant observations, her enchantment knew no bounds.

"If my mother-in-law could only hear him, you know," she said, quite audibly, "I really think she'd go off in a fit!"

When Mrs. Clarke's carriage, which was to take her and her guest on to a ball, was announced, it was half-past ten.

De Pouence, who was bound for the same house, asked for a lift; the Borden's carriage came while cloaks were being put on, and Evelyn, seizing an instant when no one was looking, asked Edwin Peele to walk home with her.

"With pleasure," he said. "And Van?"

"I don't want Van."

So, Van Buren Peele went off alone with his cigar, and his father and Miss Quincy, turning off the little main street, struck into the lane that led them by a short cut to her mother's house.

It was a splendid night, nearly at the full of the moon, and cool, with the delicious, salt coolness that Barporters declare to be unequalled in America.

Evelyn threw the lace back from her face, and looked up at the sky. "Isn't it lovely?" she asked.

"Yes. What's wrong, Evy?"

"Wrong, Mr. Peele? What makes you think that—that anything is wrong?" She laughed, a little nervously, and drew the scarf down again over her eyes.

Peele took her hand, and tucked it in his arm.

"How do I know, my dear? Because I am very fond of you, and acquainted with your face. Better waste no time; tell me at once. That is why you told me to bring you alone, you know."

"Yes, you are right. I—I don't quite know how to tell you, though."

"In the fewest possible words. And aim at the bull's-eye."

"Then—Van wants me to marry him in October, and I—don't want to."

"I see. Why this sudden impatience on his part?"

"I don't know."

"Well, that you don't share it is the principal thing. Say no."

"I have said no, but he insists. And we *have* been engaged nearly two years."

"The original reason for a long engagement still holds good: your mother is no better."

"I know. But he's very—eager."

Peele laughed. "The deuce he is! I'll 'eager' him. You sha'n't be tormented, Evy."

She turned a grateful face to him. "Thank you. I knew you'd make it all right."

"Good child! That's right—keep your faith in papa-in-law. I'll talk to Van to-morrow. Well, here we are. Good night."

Before she could answer, a thought seemed to strike him, for he went on, hurriedly: "Evy, you aren't tired of us? You don't want to get rid of him entirely, do you?"

"Oh, no, no! How could you think of such a thing, Mr. Peele? It is only that—October is so soon, and mama needs me. She—will not need me long."

There was a half-sob in her voice, and, with a final good night, he took leave of her, and went back down the shadowy path to the road.

#### IV

DEAR GWEN:

I was so glad to have your letter a week ago, though deciphering it nearly put my eyes out. What a nasty fist yours is!

Well, my dear, my advice to you is to pack your boxes, and scamper over here as fast as you can. There's really nothing like it anywhere else. The houses are palaces, nothing less, set down in little squares of lawn as big

as one's pocket-handkerchief. My bath-room is made of pink marble, with gold tub-fittings! Shocking bad taste, of course, but great fun.

Last night I dined off a service that belonged to Napoleon; and the night before, in the quaintest restaurant—like a London Bridge eating-house—and the most ducky love of a man (the proprietor) talked to us at dinner!

Lulu Clarke really isn't so bad as you think. The money has got into her head, in one way—she can't think how to spend it, and so she does wild things. But she *does* spend, right and left, and never thinks of the price of her things.

It's huge fun making out dinner-lists here—such a puzzle not to get the divorced people together! Such lots of them are divorced, you know, it's really quite amazing. I asked a man the other day, "Who is that woman in yellow?" And he said, "Which is the prettier, she or the little girl in blue, with the diamond lizard in her hair?" I said the lizard-girl; at which he chuckled tremendously, and wouldn't tell me why. When I asked Lulu, she shrieked with laughter, and told me that the yellow woman was his last wife, and the blue one his *d'à présent*!

What would the mama-in-law say if she were here? By the way, how is the dear old lass? Give her my love. How are her poor legs? What a curse gout is, to be sure.

Barport is delightful, and I hate to leave, but I'm due in a fortnight at New Harbor—a rival place, I believe—to stop with the Choisy's. I heard the other day that he has epilepsy. Awfully annoying for her, if it's true, for he's been doing very well, and they had hopes of England next. How glad I am Arkney isn't a "dip!"

Did I tell you I saw Pat Yelverton the other day? He's been out West for a year, and looks very well. Lulu says he was in love with that niece of Allegra Copeland—the girl who went mad, and jumped overboard from a steamer, a year or so ago—but I don't believe it. Allegra is in Russia, so I



suppose the duke is still alive—tire-some old man!

I must stop, as a most amusing thing is coming to play with me, a male thing named Bijou—I suppose it's its first name—and I must dress.

Write soon, and tell me all the scandal.

NELL.

DEAR PAUL:

Friend of my heart, here is the little Raoul again in Barport! It is a passion, a vice, with me, this America; it is stronger than I, and all I can do is to yield gracefully.

Briefly, I came over on the Paynters' *Reine de Saba*, and, as we had a perfect crossing, I enjoyed it. I am with the Foxes.

It is amusing, amusing, amusing, I tell thee, my old one. The Fox, she is forty, looks thirty, thinks she looks twenty, and behaves as though she were ten! One day, we played *cache-cache*, and she hid in the butler's pantry under the table. It is of a joyousness!

The husband is less joyous, but a good fellow. I have a weakness for him.

There is a daughter, aged eighteen. Figure to thyself the Venus of Milo, well corseted, with skirts half-way to the ankle, and long plaits of maize-colored hair. She is called "my little girl." She is, I think, engaged to papa's secretary, but in vain. She is intended, my dear, for whom? For me! Even so. I make the blind, the stupid, but I understand.

Lady Arkney is here. She, too, is much amused. She grows older, and the painting more pronounced. There is a man here, a count of the Holy Roman Empire, named O'Hara. "O," he tells me, means "de." Then, you remember my photograph of little Mrs. Clarke? She is more radiant than ever. Evelyn Quincy, of course, is here. She interests me. She is engaged to a Mr. Peele, whom I dislike. What wilt thou? It is natural.

The American young woman—here one says "young woman" of the young

girl a little ripe—is a delight and a wonder. Come and study her. To the eye, no difference at all between her and the young wife; she is brilliant, self-possessed, quick-witted, what you will. She blushes sometimes—affair of the complexion with circulation—understands everything that she will, looks through one with her cold eyes when she prefers not to comprehend—in which case one feels small. My dear, she is wonderful! Come and see for thyself, old Paul.

In the meantime, tell me thy news. How is thy dear wife? To her, my homages.

RAOUL.

## V

ROSEBUD WOLCOTT, fairy-like in white lawn and lace, sat by her mother on a rug.

On a divan, comfortably spread out over six feet of smooth leather and sympathetic springs, lay Grandpapa Peele.

At first, he had been called, in response to his whim, "V. A.," or "Venerable Ancestor," but, of late, Maud Wolcott never spoke of him to her daughter, except as "grandpapa." Grandpapa uttered no protest, but allowed himself the luxury of an occasional grin at the name.

"Rosebud must be a good girl, and let grandpapa rest," Maud said, presently, threading a fine needle with pink silk.

"Yes, the old gentleman wants repose, little honey-pet," he ejaculated, gravely.

"Ole zentleman," repeated the child, chuckling.

Maud threaded her needle, and worked on in silence. It is a rare and beautiful talent, that of letting uncomfortable remarks go unanswered.

Outside, some one was whistling, and the buzz of a lawn-mower mingled with the sounds that floated in at the open windows.

A clock struck four.

"Where is Van, I wonder? I told him to come at three. He's kept out

of my way purposely, I believe, of late."

"Nonsense, papa. Why should he?"

"Oh, yes, why should he? You don't know, and I do, my dear. Van never takes the trouble to do anything without reason."

"He was in New York Tuesday; and on the *Reine de Saba* yesterday; that leaves three days to be accounted for."

Peele was silent for a few moments, and then asked, abruptly, "When did you see Evelyn last?"

"Yesterday; she lunched with me. Why?"

"How did she seem?"

"Just as usual. You are very mysterious to-day, papa. First about Van, now about Evelyn."

"I am rather mysterious. Come here, Rosebud."

The child got up and toddled across to him. He lifted her up and set her astride his broad chest.

"Whose girl are you, honey-pet?" he asked.

"Mammy's gal."

"And V. A.'s gal, and 'Annouche's' gal."

"I see. Do you love the old man?"

Maud looked up from her work. "You needn't take such a serious tone, papa," she said, gravely, but with satisfaction in her voice; "you *look* very young for your age."

"Thanks, my dear, you're right; and, as far as that is concerned, I *am* young. Look at Bob League and Otis—both of them were as old as I when they married."

"Yes, I know. Poor Mr. League!"

"He did have bad luck; but, on the other hand, look at Otis and his wife."

His eyes danced with mischief as he spoke, and he watched her, slyly.

But, though she had no sense of humor, Maud Wolcott was not a fool, and she saw that her only game was that of "cards on the table."

"You are teasing me, papa, and it is rather unkind," she said, mildly. "After having been poor all your life, surely it is not unnatural that I should hope you will do something for Rosebud."

"Do somesing for Rosebud," mimicked the child, using his coat as a bridle, and galloping violently.

"Hello, stop it, you imp!"

He set her down and stood, with his hands in his pockets, looking thoughtfully at his daughter, who had resumed her work.

"I don't think it unnatural for you to hope that I'll do something for Rosebud, Maud," he said, slowly, at last. "There are birds that feed their young with their own flesh; you want to feed yours with my flesh."

"What a disgusting thing to say, papa! I do hope she didn't understand you."

"Not she. Look at it this way, then. You married Harry, and stepped at once out of what was real poverty into—this." Pausing, he glanced meaningly around the beautiful room. "Now, mind you, I'm not complaining, Maud—you must understand that. I just wish to draw your attention to one fact—the fact that, out of your plenty, you never made the least effort to help me in my eternal, tormenting struggle. You might, at least, have given me a cravat at Christmas. Thomas's daughter gives him cravats at Christmas."

"But, papa, you know how little we have; barely enough to keep up the house and dress decently. As I couldn't give you anything that would really help, it didn't seem worth while to give you anything."

He shook his head, whimsically. "Thomas's daughter thought otherwise."

"Really, you needn't compare me with your servant's daughter, papa."

"I'll not, my dear; she, too, might object. Hush!" He raised a warning hand, and went rapidly on. "That was a joke—of course. Well, all of this goes to prove, not that Jonah was 'eat up by de whale,' but that it would be more becoming on your part to leave me in peace about my money. To help convince you that this is the best course for you to take, I will tell you that I hope to live thirty years longer, and that I may marry,

endow a hospital for the incurably stupid, or do anything else that comes into my head with my famous two millions, and that, in short—I won't be bothered about it."

She rose, with some dignity.

"Very well, papa. You seem to me to have been rather unnecessarily disagreeable about a very small matter; but never mind. Come, Rosebud, time to go to Annouche."

Edwin Peele watched them go upstairs, the child chattering as she climbed, clinging to the balustrade; and then, when all was quiet, he sighed. "Poor Maud!" he said.

## VI

WHEN Van Buren came in, a few minutes later, he found his father at the piano, picking out an accompaniment, with the soft pedal down.

"Morning, father," the younger man said, holding out his hand.

Peele shook it. "Morning, Van. Well, what's all this I hear about your being married in October?"

Van laughed. "Right, O! What do you think of it?"

"Wrong, O! I should say, seeing that Evelyn doesn't like it."

"Did she tell you that?" asked Van, sharply.

"She did. Well?"

"I'm going to talk her over, that's all."

The young man sat down on the edge of a big chair, and lighted a cigarette. He was very fair, and his languid blue eyes and slow manner gave an impression of gentleness that was emphatically denied by the long, slightly protruding chin.

His father looked at him keenly, and then smiled. "That's it? You're just going to talk her over, are you? Think you can?"

"Know it. A little bluster, a little pleading—" Van laughed, and blew rings of smoke up to the ceiling. "No woman really objects to being urged to antedate her wedding-day."

"I'm ashamed of you, Van. You

ought to be on your knees to that girl!"

Peele spoke so sternly that his son rose and turned full around to stare at him. "Oh, I say!" he ejaculated, faintly.

"Yes, on your knees. Now, tell me, at once, what was your real reason for trying to persuade her to a step she doesn't wish to take."

"My real reason! Good heavens, father, I want to marry her—that's why we're engaged."

"Worthy of your friend Mott, that remark. Well?"

Van stared at his father, but, little by little, his face changed, and he lowered his eyes.

"All right, have it so—debts!"

There was a short silence, and then the older man said, quietly: "I thought so. How much?"

His son named a sum large enough to cause him to start. Then, with a short laugh, he added, "I forgot that I am now rich. Well?"

"You get on my nerves with your, 'Well.' What do you mean?"

"I mean that you haven't made debts to that amount since June, when the wedding was set for January."

"Of course, I haven't. They're tired of waiting, though. They think it isn't going to come off. I hope you understand, now?"

Peele walked across the room and back, before he answered: "I do understand. I'll write you a cheque for the sum to-night. And you will be married when Evelyn wishes it."

His son tried to thank him, but was cut short. "Evelyn's money is to be settled on herself, and I shall give you an allowance on which, with your own money, you can afford to live as she will wish to live. Understand? Now, for God's sake, go, and leave me alone—I've had enough of you."

Van obeyed, red with anger, but afraid to protest. But, when the father was once more alone, he murmured, "Poor boy!" even as on his daughter's exit, half an hour before, he had murmured, "Poor Maud!"



## VII

Bijou Mott had three rooms in Barport's one apartment-house, "The Washington," a stone's throw from Barney's, whence the few meals that he took alone were brought him.

On the morning after Van Peele's interview with his father, Bijou sat in a big chair near one of the open windows of his living-room, eating his breakfast, which had been served by Enoch, Barney's right-hand man, a gigantic negro with a mouth so flexible that he was known to the boys of the town as "Rubber-lips."

Barney had sent word by "Rubber-lips" that he had a word to say to Mr. Mott, and would stop in, in a few minutes; so Bijou, whose sensitive soul abhorred solitude, was eating very slowly, as he glanced through his morning's post, trying to lengthen the meal in order that he might really enjoy it while Barney talked to him.

The room was a delightful one, done in gay chintz, with several good pictures on the striped green-and-white walls, and in one corner a baby-grand piano. Bijou's various collecting fads had filled the room with some very good china and pewter, and in a canoe, slung in the dormer-window, grew masses of heliotrope and mignonette.

Bijou ate his eggs slowly, and then read his letters—all but one invitation. The morning papers lay spread out on the floor near him, and Barney had not yet come. This was a nuisance, and, to pass the time, he rose and, going into the next room, came back with a little green watering-pot.

"Time for your bath, my beauties," he said, aloud, spraying the water on the flowers.

The water sparkled in the sun; the air was delicious. Bijou glanced out of the window. "Good day for the *Queen of Sheba*," he added; and, as he spoke, the door opened, and Barney came in.

"Good morning, Barney; how are you? I've been saving my coffee to

drink with you. Fetch a cup, will you?"

Barney opened a carved Florentine cabinet, and brought a cup and saucer, after which he sat down and poured out the coffee with deft hands, first for Bijou, and then for himself.

"How was the ball?" he asked, as he dropped four pieces of sugar into his own cup.

"Very pretty. O'Hara has no more idea of leading a cotillon, though, than I have of leading an army."

"Why didn't you do it?" Barney's small, pale face, the keen lines of which had long been blurred by small-pox scars, was turned upon Bijou, thoughtfully.

"Wasn't asked. Old Mrs. Wolcott has taken a dislike to me. Can't see me."

"Didn't she have a daughter, the old lady? Seems to me I rec'lect a long-legged little girl, with lots of hair, going about with Harry."

"Married, and lives in California."

"I declare! Who'd she marry?"

Mott spread anchovy paste carefully on a bit of toast. "Man named Ogilvy; you never saw him. Very good fellow, I believe."

"Oh! Well, I might's well get to work, an' tell you why I come over this morning, Mr. Mott."

"Fire away."

"Well, it's this way. There's a woman that's got it into her head she's going to give a dinner at my place, an' raound she comes every day, an' pesters the life out of me. Yesterday, she offered me two hundred dollars extry if I'd give her an evening."

"By Jove! Who is it?" asked the young man, scenting a good story for dinner-table use.

"Her name's—well, never mind her name. The p'int is this, Mr. Mott. I heerd Mis' Fox tell some folks the other night about an English marchioness that makes her living taking young girls into society; reg'lar income—see?"

"Oh, yes, it's done."

Barney rose and picked up his hat. "Well, Mr. Mott, it always seems a pity

to me that you should waste your time fooling raound as you do."

"Do I fool round more than other people, Barney?" This *was* going to be a dinner-table success!

Barney sat down suddenly, and looked him full in the face. "Of course, you do, an' you know it's well's I do. Who takes you seriously? No one. They're all pretty silly, all those young folks, but's far's I can see, you're the worst. An' why? Not because you're built silly, because you *ain't*; an' you needn't tell me you like it!"

Mott laughed. "I ought to give you an almighty snubbing, Barney, but it's too good. Go on."

"Snub me if you like, Mr. Mott, but I've always said it's a pity you go on this way, for, Lord love ye, 'tain't every one has your brains."

"Society needs a jester, Barney. And I don't see what all this has to do with your O. B.!"

"O. B.?"

"Outer barbarian. What's the connection?"

Barney coughed. "Well, Bijou—Mr. Mott—it's like this. Why don't you take her up, an' help her along, an' make some money?"

Bijou shouted. Then, he stopped short. Barney's face was full of anxious inquiry, and Bijou was fond of the queer little man.

"You're a good sort, Barney, but it won't do. Besides, I don't need money."

Barney did not speak, but his eyes held a flat contradiction. Then, "She's very pretty, mind you, an' she's young, an' she's just bustin' to git in with the swells. Her name's Feiling——"

Bijou set down his cup, suddenly. "The little woman with the beautiful eyes?" he asked.

"Yes. Did you ever see such eyes in your life? Come, now, Bijou Mott, why don't you think of it? To my way of thinking, she's much nicer than lots of the swells. I *couldn't* give her an evening, though, you see. Once I begin with them sort, my place is ruined."

Bijou laughed. "I believe you are working me. You want me to pave the way for you."

"Perhaps, I do, a little."

"It breaks my heart to have to disappoint you, but I fear I must. I could hardly tell her I'd introduce her to the swells—for a big sum—could I?"

Barney rose again. "Well, you think it over. How do you s'pose that marchioness began? Are you dining with me to-night?"

"No; at Mrs. Fox's. Good-bye."

When the little man had gone, Bijou went to a small oval Empire mirror, and looked at himself.

"So he's seen through you, my son," he said, aloud, to the youthful-looking, smooth-faced man in the glass. "It would be fatal to my reputation if any one else caught on to the idea that I'm not such a fool as I appear. Let us don our cap and bells at once."

## VIII

META FOX stood in front of her mirror that same evening, smiling delightedly at herself, while her maid tied a bit of blue ribbon to the second of her two long pig-tails, into which a great deal of some other woman's hair had been discreetly woven.

"Is my sash all right, Kate?"

"Lovely, ma'am."

Mrs. Fox wore a white Mother Hubbard frock, reaching half-way to her ankles. Around her unconfined waist, the blue sash was loosely bound; her stockings and shoes were blue; the latter were adorned with huge rosettes. Her large, fair face, discreetly touched up, looked curiously youthful in the soft light, under the flopping dimity sun-bonnet. There was in her round, blue eyes no expression that might not have been in those of the child of six she was intended to represent.

Meta Fox's mind had not developed appreciably for many years, under the rigorous training for babyishness she had given it.

"Now, then, my dolly!"

The maid, a sober-faced, elderly

woman, with deep lines about her mouth, gave her the gaily-dressed nigger-doll, and, with a last look, Mrs. Fox went down-stairs to receive her guests.

The maid looked after her with a strange softening of her stern eyes. "What a child she is!" To this woman, who had a husband in the lunatic asylum and a son in prison for burglary, life seemed very strange.

Mrs. Fox met her husband on the stairs, and, giggling helplessly, they went down to the dining-room.

Fox, a small, yellow-faced man, was very cleverly got up as a Japanese baby, and was ridiculously successful in his impersonation.

The cleverest maker-up of the New York theatres had been brought down, at an enormous expense, by Mrs. Fox, and, armed with a long list of addresses, had gone from house to house with his alligator-skin bag, painting the faces of the guests for the baby-party.

"Oh, George, you are too killing! Just look at the men!" whispered Mrs. Fox, as they went into the dining-room for a final inspection of the tables. The butler and his underlings stood with rigidly expressionless faces, watching their master and mistress.

The guests were to be seated at one large table, on which was laid a red-and-white cloth—though Mr. Fox had pointed out, with the logic for which he was famous, that none of the children of their friends were served on colored table-cloths. In the middle of the table was a little willow cradle with drawn, white curtains, and around it were spread, in artistic confusion, beautiful toys of all kinds, chiefly of what Mrs. Fox, in her baby-talk, called the wind-up-and-skedaddle kind. At each plate stood a big bowl of bread and milk, and on each serviette a hunch of sponge-cake.

"Imagine some of their faces over the bread and milk! Miles Browne's, for instance, and Van Peele's!"

Mrs. Fox nodded satisfaction to the butler, and led the way back to the drawing-room, at one end of which stood a Punch-and-Judy theatre.

On the lawn outside the library windows, swings were hung in the trees, and, further away from the house, a merry-go-round with a steam musical attachment awaited customers.

"I'm crazy to see how Bijou will come. He's such a goose, and doesn't mind how idiotic he is, which is so nice of him."

"Miles is coming in one of the German creeping-cages, you know," returned Mr. Fox, inspecting the tip of his pigtail with interest. "Ah, there's a ring!"

Mrs. Fox kissed each of her guests, with childish awkwardness, an act which caused much merriment; then, she inquired of each, "How long did oo'r mama say oo could stay?"

Babies poured in, to the number of twenty-eight. There was an Indian baby, in fringed garments; two French peasants, in fluted caps and queer blue blouses; one very small woman was carried in by her husband, he being dressed as a five-year-old Bavarian Highlander, and she reclining on a blue-and-red-check *Wickelkissen*.

Rubber rings were sucked, rattles were clattered, noisy quarrels took place; it was most mirthful.

At the very last, just as they had given him up, the door opened, and Bijou Mott entered—in a perambulator. His legs were hidden away in the unusual depth of the carriage, he wore a frilled bonnet over a pink skull cap, his frock was of India lawn covered with lace, and a bit of arrow-root hung about his neck on a blue ribbon.

Enoch, Barney's big servant, dressed as a "mammy," pushed the wagon, and, when the excitement had died away and dinner was finally announced, he lifted Bijou out of his pink nest, and carried him to the table.

The bowls of milk, that Mrs. Fox declared must be emptied before anything else was served, aroused much laughter, as did the serviettes, which, unrolled, proved to be bibs, embroidered with mottoes, such as, "Don't be dainty," "Eat and be thankful," "Don't be greedy."

Evelyn Quincy, dressed as a baby

Lap, all in fur, sat next a negro boy, who continually stole from her plate. This was de Pouence, hugely pleased with himself in his woolly wig and neatly blackened face. Opposite, Lulu Clarke and Van Peele splashed milk at each other with their spoons, and whacked each other's fingers.

After dinner, Punch and Judy were enjoyed, though, during the performance, one baby stole another's coral ring, and had to be carried, screaming, from the room.

Then came a prize contest.

Maud Wolcott, a baby giantess, sat down at the piano as accompanist, and each child, in turn, sang a Mother Goose song.

Van Peele led off, with "Ding, Dong, Bell; Pussy's in the Well." Next came Mr. Browne, a stock-broker of fifty, who piped, in a high key, "I Love Little Pussy," broke down, wept, and, comforted, went on to the end. Evelyn sang, "See-saw, Marjorie Daw," and so it went.

The prize, a huge chocolate pig, was won by de Pouence, who, having bravely sung, "*J'ai du bon Tabac*," to the very end, burst into a hysterical squeal of terror, and ran and hid behind a sofa, whence he was lured by the pig.

During this last song, a man came quietly in by one of the windows. He stood behind backs until the excitement had subsided, and de Pouence, sitting on the floor with his pig, was surrounded by a small crowd clamoring for "a bite." Then, the Lap baby, who, finding her furs very warm, had taken them off, and now appeared in a blue evening gown, turned—to find her future father-in-law beside her.

"Oh, you startled me!" she said, giving him her hand.

"Sorry. How absurd all this is! Who's that nigger?"

"Count de Pouence. Isn't he well done? And just look at Bijou Mott!"

Mott, on seeing Mr. Peele, dropped his rattle and stretched out his arms, gibbering wildly until his "mammy" picked him up, and carried him across to where Peele sat with Evelyn.

"He wants to come to you, sah," grinned "Rubber-lips."

But Peele drew back. "You are really magnificent, Mott," he said, "but I don't care for young children."

A few minutes later, every one had gone out to the swings and the merry-go-round, and Edwin Peele and Evelyn followed, idly.

"Has Van spoken to you about my talk with him, Evy?"

"Yes. Thanks, very much. I am fearfully spoiled, I suppose, but I couldn't bear the thought of not having my way about my own wedding-day."

"You are a terrible young woman, and I tremble at the thought of having you for a daughter!"

She took his arm, affectionately. "But the having you for a father is one of the very nicest things about it! That's my point of view. Mr. Peele, may I ask you something? And you won't think me impertinent?"

"I know what you're going to ask, dear, and I'll answer it at once. You've all but asked it several times. I was in love with your mother!"

She was silent for a moment; then, she said: "I thought so, though I don't know why. Mother was very beautiful, wasn't she?"

"Yes. She was the most beautiful girl I ever saw. I was only a boy, but I really loved her, and now—her girl is going to become mine."

It was a pleasant thought to both of them, as they stood watching the giant babies playing in the artificial moonlight. Lady Arkney was being swung by Mr. Fox, her thick, frizzled hair flying about her; further away, a group was singing, "Ring Around a-Rosy."

## IX

Two miles inland at Barport, there is a beautiful narrow plain, between high mountains, and this plain was formerly the favorite camping-ground of White Elk, a great chief who met, on equal terms, certain English officers, and surprised them by his beau-

tiful, grave manners and splendid bearing.

A small river rushes down from the pines on the mountain to the north, and, caught in a trap at the edge of the plain, sparkles like a mirror in the sun. Opposite the lake, just under the edge of the mountain, a broad road winds, shaded by great trees that may have waved their leafy boughs over the heads of White Elk and his braves. This road passes the plain, twisting to the right about the base of the mountain; but a new road has been built from it down to the plain, and, one day in August, not long ago, this road and its tributary were thronged with a beautiful crowd of the finest horses and the handsomest men and women that America can boast.

A race-track has been cut in the thick grass of the plain—a carefully planned oval track, bordered by the inevitable whitewashed fence, and ornamented on one side by the judges' stand, and on the other side, far off to the left, by a cluster of low, hastily put-up buildings—the stables.

At the end of the oval, opposite the stables, there is a large, unpainted, barn-like place, in which are the county exhibits, for a county fair is combined with the Barport Horse Show, and in the crowd that shifts about the place all day, there is that curious mixture of the leisure-class and the working-class which is characteristic of America.

The farmers, having taken—or just missed, through the partiality or idiocy of one of the judges—the prizes for their fat pigs, their cochinchinas, or their pumpkins, saunter out and watch the races and the exhibition of four-in-hands, carriage horses, roadsters and ponies; and the women and men who have come to the show in beautiful carriages or on lofty coaches, stroll through the exhibition-rooms and criticize the live-stock and farm products.

The second day of that year's Horse Show, Lulu Clarke and Lady Arkney came out on Miles Browne's

coach, and, after a very good luncheon, they climbed down at the English-woman's suggestion, "to stretch their legs," and, accompanied by Edwin Peele and Bijou Mott, made their leisurely way across the paddock to the exhibition-hall.

As they reached the wide door, and stopped to buy entrance tickets, they were laughing at the recollection of Browne's horror, when, at the baby-party, he had been asked to draw back the curtains of the little cradle on the table, and take out the prize doll—to find a live baby peacefully sleeping therein!

The dusky interior of the hall, lighted only by a narrow skylight, was temptingly cool, and the great pumpkins and squashes looked like great, dim lamps in the shadows. Along the sides of the hall, tables were arranged, and on these tables were displayed all kinds of farm produce and handiwork. Beyond, another door led to the live-stock department, whence a confusion of noises penetrated through the chatter of voices about the visitors.

"Here's the first prize for cheese," exclaimed Lulu, pausing before a table at which an elderly woman, with a handsome, placid face, presided. "How good it looks! And just look at the butter! Did you make it yourself?"

The woman smiled. "Oh, yes! I wouldn't let the hired girls touch my butter. They never take the same interest."

Lady Arkney stared at her. "So you have trouble with servants, just as *we* do, do you?" she asked.

"Just as *who* do?"

But Mrs. Sam Rider understood. "Why—*we*, you know. Bijou, tell her what I mean."

But Bijou hurried them on. "Look at the pumpkins. Ever make a pumpkin-devil, Lady Arkney?"

"Dear me! whatever is a pumpkin-devil?"

"Oh, a lantern made of a hollowed pumpkin. You cut a hideous face on one side——"



"Ah, yes, I see. You mean a Jack-o'-lantern."

There was apple-butter at the next table, and, on seeing it, Lulu declared that life would not be worth living unless she could have some instantly.

"Can't eat it without bread," suggested Lady Arkney. "Filthy stuff!" The girl, on whose table the apple-butter was displayed, tossed her head angrily, and was about to speak, when Peele interrupted: "Nothing better in the world than well-made apple-butter," he said. "I want some myself. Bijou, buy a loaf of that bread there by the door. Lulu, you stand the butter, and I'll buy the apple-butter—that is, if it's for sale?"

The farmer's daughter bridled, as he turned politely to her. "Oh, yes, I guess it is. Mother didn't count on its being sold, but I guess she won't mind selling it to *you*, Mr. Peele."

Bijou rushed back in a moment, a big, crusty loaf on his arm, and helpless with laughter. Behind him came Mrs. Clarke, carrying a big jar of butter. "The woman wouldn't 'dig into it,' she said, so I had to buy it all. What'll we do with the rest?"

The farmer's daughter, much excited, produced a knife, and cut great slices from the loaf; these, Bijou spread thick with the butter, and then Peele covered the butter with the apple-jam that Lady Arkney had despised.

A crowd of farmers and farmers' wives and daughters gathered about the little group, and watched them eat. Bijou cut his bread into long slices with his pocket-knife, as he declared that he had seen it done that way, and Lady Arkney, taking very kindly to the apple-butter, borrowed a spoon, and ate some from a saucer.

As the impromptu meal was finished, Evelyn and Van came in, and, seeing the crowd, made their way to the centre of it.

"Well, father! What on earth are you eating? Tar?"

Evelyn put up her lorgnon, and peered through it. She looked very

lovely in her gray batiste frock, over which opened her long white dust-coat. Peele offered her some bread-and-butter, but she refused it, adding that only honey could tempt her.

"I never eat honey since some one told me it's made of rotten pears," Lady Arkney observed, as they passed through the door and proceeded to examine the live-stock.

They found cows, pigs, calves, chickens and pigeons, many of them already decorated with the distinguishing scrap of blue ribbon.

One pig, quite the fattest any of the party had ever seen, particularly attracted their attention, and Lulu Clarke insisted that she wished to buy him. "It would be *such* a lark to send him in a lovely gilded pagoda as a present to Meta Fox!"

Bijou was enchanted, and at once looked up the owner, despite Peele's lazy protests.

"What'd she do with it?" he asked.

"That's just the joke! You remember her giving a monkey to the bishop, on his birthday?"

"Oh, that's different. The bishop's her uncle."

Evelyn and Van listened in amused silence to the lively discussion that ensued, until at length Mrs. Clarke said, with a decisive nod of her pretty head, "Well, I'll promise not to buy it, unless Bijou will consent to tie a string around its leg, and lead it across the paddock to O'Hara's coach, and then give it to Meta."

Peele shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, if you make it depend on Mott's sense of decency!"

At this moment, Bijou came back, followed by a little freckled farmer with a straw in his mouth, and Van hastily explained the condition of the purchase.

Bijou, delighted, went off to get a stout ribbon, with which to lead his gift, and Mrs. Clarke and the farmer began a brisk argument about the price of the pig. The farmer declared the blue ribbon had doubled Roly-Poly's value, which was originally a high one, but Mrs. Clarke avowed

herself to be almost destitute, and unable to pay the sum asked. Then, just as the farmer was about to consent to her terms, she suddenly agreed to give him what he had originally asked, and ten dollars extra for his good will.

Bijou came back, bringing a broad, rose-colored ribbon, and, when this had been fastened securely about Roly-Poly's leg, the party left the exhibition building, and held a short council behind it, among the farmers' wagons and horses.

It was decided that Bijou should stay where he was, until the others had had time to reach the coach, and that then he should march across the paddock, leading Roly-Poly, and present that white elephant to the victim.

Luckily, Count O'Hara's four-in-hand stood beside that of Miles Browne, and, in a few moments, Mrs. Clarke was talking to Mrs. Fox, while below, leaning against the fence, Van Peele and Evelyn watched them.

It so happened that, shortly after the return to the race-track of Mrs. Clarke and Lady Arkney, the exhibit of ladies' saddle-horses was held, and Mrs. Fox, who was riding her own Cock-o'-the-walk, disappeared—to ride up, a few minutes later, with Mrs. Borden and two or three other women, before the judges.

While the judges were consulting, and the women were putting their horses through their paces with much skill and *sang-froid*, Mrs. Clarke beheld Bijou and Roly-Poly slowly approaching over the grass. Roly-Poly appeared to be somewhat unmanageable—pulling violently at his ribbon, and, too, from time to time lying down with much determination; but Bijou's progress was sure, though slow.

At length, the judges came to a decision, and, amid thundering applause from the crowd, the blue ribbon was fastened to Cock-o'-the-walk's bridle.

Then it was that Bijou outdid him-

self. Lifting the immense white pig in his arms, he succeeded in dropping him over the rails, just inside the track, and, by means of sundry jerks at the ribbon, dragged him along at a porcine gallop to the place opposite the exit. Then, just as Mrs. Fox, walking her horse, was about to pass him, he leaped the low barrier, and shoved the end of the ribbon into her hand.

Meta looked at the pig, which had sat down to rest, and then, touching the horse with her crop, she started at a canter down the track.

The judges stared wrathfully, and conferred together. It was an outrage; Bijou Mott ought to be expelled from the club; Mrs. Fox was an idiot, who made Barport the laughing-stock of the country.

In the meantime, Meta had made the circuit, and come back, the pig, half-dead with fatigue, galloping for dear life behind her.

Meta had often said she would love to belong to a circus, and now she enjoyed some of the delights of that picturesque life, as, making a low bow to the multitude, and with a final wave of her crop at the furious judges, she trotted through the exit, and disappeared behind the grandstand.

## X

EXTRACT from the *New York Planet*:

"Barport is agog with the latest witty performance of Mrs. George Fox, who last week outdid herself with the most delightful affair of the season—a baby-party, at which were present: Mr. and Mrs. —, Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So, Captain —, Miss X—, Miss Y—, Miss Z—, the Messrs. A—, B— and C—," etc. (All the names wrong.)

"Before the public had tired of discussing her clever fête, the brilliant lady has again dazzled it with her inventive genius. This time she appeared on a pig's back at the races, and, owing, of course, to the well-

known courtesy of the judges, Mr. Vann, Mr. Bowen, Mr. James and Mr. Montgomery, to everybody's delight the popular lady's piggy carried off the blue ribbon."

Extract from the *St. Louis Messenger*:

"That the self-styled 'smart set' of Barport does not represent our great nation is a fact that must bring a feeling of warmth to every patriotic heart. The unparalleled vulgarity of these people, to say nothing of the immorality of many of them, is such as to cause the thoughtful man to shudder, and to thank God that his wife and his innocent daughters are not exposed to their influences.

"The reckless waste of wealth going on at Barport, the heedless folly of society there, the thoughtless disregard of the important things of this life, are, indeed, too well known to need comment; but it seems that when things reach such a pitch that a well-known leader in society *races* on horseback with an unfortunate pig attached to her saddle by a chain, a word must be said—" The word proceeds to be said.

Extract from *Our Village*:

"It is amusing to note the excitement caused throughout the country among that class of people who know New York's society men and women by their first names, but not by sight, by the amusing incident of the pig, the other day at the Barport Horse Show.

"The truth is simply that, as Mrs. George Fox, having carried off the prize for the Ladies' Saddle Horse Class, left the scene of her triumph, that well-known joker, 'Tom' Lewis, presented her with 'Roly-Poly,' the pig that had taken the prize at the fair, thereby causing much merriment.

"In reference to the chorus of horror that this surely innocent jest has caused, we can only repeat the old saying: 'Fierce is the light which beats upon a throne.'"

Extract from the next edition of *Our Village*:

"We regret that in our last number a mistake was made in the name of the gentleman who presented the prize pig to Mrs. Fox at the Barport Horse Show. It was not Mr. 'Tom' Lewis, who, we understand, is now in Paris, but Mr. 'Bijou' Mott to whom the glory is due."

## XI

It was raining as Van Peele stepped into his automobile, the Jabberwock, and started off across country—a soft, silvery, warm rain that lent a certain poetic melancholy to the scene, and fitted in well with the man's mood.

He passed the old inn where Washington was once quartered, which is now so famous for its waffles and fried chicken, and then, turning to the left, took a rough, hummocky lane that wound, with apparent aimlessness, away to the horizon, over countless wooden bridges, up hill and down dale.

Peele was alone, having given his chauffeur, Briggs, a holiday, and it was evident, from the poise of his head and the way he drove, that he had a goal in view.

The goal proved to be a small, weather-beaten farm-house. He housed the Jabberwock under a shed at one side of it, and went up the narrow gravel path, over which lilac bushes nearly met, sprinkling him with showers as he brushed them.

He knocked at the door, and it was opened by a thin, underfed-looking woman, who welcomed him in a complaining voice, as he entered the oil-cloth-covered corridor, of which a black-walnut hat-rack and a majolica umbrella-stand were the only ornaments.

"You kin go into the parlor, Mr. Van Buren," the woman continued, opening a door to the right, and then passing on; "I'll call her."

The parlor was a small, tidy room, with a marble-topped centre-table, on



which rested several gilt-edged books. A "parlor organ," six Puritanical chairs and a strong-minded-looking horsehair sofa completed the furniture. Peele looked around and shuddered. Outside, the unpruned lilac bushes hung against the windows, turning the light within to a greenish dusk. A picture of Daniel Webster frowned down from above the mantelpiece.

At last, the door opened, and a girl came in—a small, thin, hipless girl, with far-apart, gray-blue eyes, and a dimpled chin. She wore a brown merino gown, the clumsy cut of which accentuated every defect of her figure, and her heavy black hair, worn over her ears in the atrocious "Cleo" style, increased the gravity of her small face.

"Well?" she asked.

Van laughed. "Did you think I'd given in? No, my good girl. I was taking a spin in my automobile, and why should I not come in this direction as well as any other?"

She sat down on a chair near the window, which she opened, letting in the scent of rain-soaked foliage.

"A pleasant day for a spin," she said, gravely.

There was a pause, during which the man's eyes did not move from the girl's face. Then, he said, slowly:

"How's your mother?"

"Worse. The doctor says she can't last the month out."

"Poor child! Then, you'll be absolutely alone."

"Yes."

"Pauline!"

"Mr. Van Buren."

"Pauline—I don't believe you care a cent for me."

"Don't you?"

"No, hang it, I don't."

"Well, I don't believe that you care a cent for me."

"That's nonsense."

"Is it?"

He rose and, sitting down at one end of the sofa, leaned his elbows on the arm of it, and began talking, fast and eagerly, taking up an old discussion where it had been broken off. "If you won't do it, then—I'll do as I've

told you I would. I shall keep my word."

"Do keep your word, Mr. Van Buren."

"Any one would think I was asking you *not* to marry me!"

She was silent, her slim hands folded tightly in her lap.

"And when you know your mother would die the happier for it! I don't see how you can resist her, even though you find so little difficulty in resisting me."

She rose. "Oh, why can't you let me alone?" she cried, twisting her fingers together; "why don't you leave me alone?"

"That's why—because I can't, Pauline; you know I can't. Didn't I try? You don't know how far I went the other day, trying to drive the thought of you from my mind."

"Aunt Jennie was at the fair," she began, hesitatingly; "she saw you there."

"The deuce she did! I didn't see her."

"I know. And—she heard them call you by your name—Mr. Peele."

There was no complaint in her voice, only a curious sort of shyness, as if his having lied to her about his name embarrassed her.

"Oh, yes—my name is Peele. I don't quite know why I never told you when you asked me what it was. At first, I told you Van Buren because—I liked you to call me by my first name. My father is Edwin Peele, and my sister is Mrs. Harry Wolcott. Now, you know all about me."

"Yes."

Her passivity ended by irritating him, as it had done so often before. He rose, angrily, and caught up his cap. "Well—good-bye. I'm sick of this everlasting trying to wear a hole in a stone."

"I'm not a stone."

"Then, why, in God's name, won't you marry me, and put an end to it? What earthly difference does it make to you if we keep it quiet for a while or not? Once I'm married, my father is bound to come round, and his coming

round means more now than it did a month ago. Pauline, if you love me the least little bit in the world, marry me. I'll come out any day, and your old minister will marry us in this very room. Think of it, dear!"

The girl's delicate lips straightened, obstinately.

"No, I won't. You may do just as you like about never coming again, but I won't have a private marriage, as if it were something wrong."

Peele's chin seemed suddenly to dominate the rest of his face, and, with a slight shrug of his shoulders, he left the room, and shut the door.

A few minutes later, the Jabberwock was bouncing down the lane at break-neck speed, through a pelting rain that nearly blinded its driver.

"There's an end to that!" Van Peele declared to himself, with savage emphasis. "She will find she has not the only strong will in the world."

And yet, subconsciously, he knew that he could not keep away from Pauline Birch, that she had had an irresistible charm for him since the day, a year and a half ago, when he had first met her, sitting helpless in a wagon behind a balking horse, in that very lane.

He was a poor man, she was a poor girl, and Evelyn Quincy had a large fortune; that was the difference, in a nutshell, and he was not courageous enough to give up either the fortune or the girl he loved. "*Das ist alles schon einmal da gewesen.*"

## XII

MAUD WOLCOTT had told her husband of her father's extraordinary speech to her about his money, and Harry, fat and easy-going, had laughed.

"Good old grandpapa! I don't wonder he was a little bored, Maud; you *have* rather overdone the grandpapa act since the inheritance."

Maud flushed with vexation. Harry had such a tiresome way of saying everything.

"I haven't at all, Harry. And I do think papa might tell me, definitely, whether or not he means to leave Rosebud anything. I'm not asking for anything for myself, you know. And, as he can't leave anything to Van—which was really unnecessarily disagreeable of Aunt Amanda—to whom should he leave it, if not to his only grandchild?"

"Van may have a dozen children," remarked Harry, stuffing his pipe, and again using his talent for irritating, "or your father may marry—himself. I know a lot of women who would jump at the chance."

"Jump at the chance! What a thing to say! Well, he may do as he likes, but I must say, I'm disappointed in papa."

Wolcott rose and went to the window. "I say, Maud, here's O'Hara again, strolling on the lawn as if he owned it. If you don't look out, people will begin to talk."

Maud flushed. "Absurd! If you don't wish me to see him, tell William to say I'm out."

"Oh, I don't care, dear. He seems a harmless pussy-cat enough to me."

So, O'Hara was admitted, and passed an hour gossiping with Mrs. Wolcott, who somehow felt herself always at her best with him, and therefore liked him.

He was a tall, rather round-shouldered man, with a hooked nose and vivid blue eyes that saw everything. His father having been a miner in the north of Michigan, where he made a large fortune in copper, the son had been sent to Yale, and, in consequence, his friends were friends of long standing, for he was nearly forty. Finding that his religion would in no way work against him in society, he became very fervent, built small Catholic churches in any places that chanced to please him; and, on the occasion of the disappearance in Patagonia of the two missionary monks, Father John and Father Luke, he fitted out, and paid all the expenses of, the search-party that ultimately found the missing men and brought them back to civilization. It was this service to the Church that had

been rewarded with the title he wore, half in shame, half in pride.

Maud Wolcott, splendid in her double strength of beauty and inherited social position, he admired deeply, and once, a year or so before that Summer, on learning that Mrs. Wolcott's father was in more or less desperate financial difficulties, he had hinted, in easily comprehensible terms, his desire to help Peele.

Maud had not let him come to any open expression of his wish, but had tacitly thanked him and made him see that she appreciated the kindness of his awful blunder. Since that day, they had been friends.

As she chatted with him that morning in the cool drawing-room, she recalled the scene, and sighed at the memory of a great sheaf of bills locked away in her writing-table. Her father would, she had no doubt, give her the money, but it happened that she could not ask him for it. The bills, with one exception, were for clothes, and when, on a recent occasion, she and Harry had, in Peele's presence, had words on the subject of another dressmaker's bill, Peele had drawn a cheque for the amount, asking, as he handed it to her, "Any more, Maud?"

Furious and ashamed, she had lied, and she knew her father would not, in the event of an appeal, pass over the lie in silence.

"Yes, I want a yacht," O'Hara was saying. "Paynter has promised to help me about it, for I know less than nothing about boats. Something between the size of the *Reine de Saba*, and the Websters' *Butterfly*."

"How delightful it will be!" She smiled again, and gazed absently out the window, her big white hands clasped on her knees.

"Yes. You must be good to me, and tell me how to have it furnished and decorated, will you?"

"Oh, yes, I'll love to! I invented the most lovely frieze of red roses, the other day; I'll give that to you—I have no use for it."

"But—I don't want you to give it

to me. Such ideas are worth a definite price, you know."

Her head swam, and, looking hastily around, she bent forward.

"Will you—give me a commission for the decorating and furnishing of your yacht?"

O'Hara flushed—a burning wave of color that he felt even under his hair.

"You—a commission, Mrs. Wolcott!"

Maud nodded; she had her courage in both hands, now. "Yes; why shouldn't I? I need the money; you need the artistic help."

"But I—you——"

"Oh, yes; I know. You'd like better to give me the money, or to lend it to me—you understand, and you are generous. But, both of those ways being out of the question, *utterly* out of the question, why should you hesitate at a way that is perfectly honest, and would be perfectly dignified if people only measured things by a true standard?"

"You are right. Very well, I will do it, and—and I can only thank you for your kindness, for I am perfectly aware that my yacht will be a thousand times more beautiful than if any furnisher and decorator on earth arranged it."

He rose. This was the moment to go.

"Are you dining with the Bordens to-night? Very well. Good-bye, until this evening."

Maud went out on the lawn, and walked about under the trees, thinking of what she had done, and trying to see with unprejudiced eyes whether or not it was an outrageous thing to have proposed. She was very clever at designing, and all her friends had a way of asking her advice about any changes in their house-decorations, no one of them thinking the less of her for giving it. Now, she was selling it—that was all the difference; and O'Hara understood that he was to get the full worth of his money. Bah! It was absurd to waste a thought on the subject!

Slowly, she went back to the house and up-stairs to her studio, a big room on the third floor, in which she had

made a superficial attempt to master most of the branches of modern art. Her facility had been fatal to her excelling in any one thing, but this she did not know, and she was proud of her versatility.

Sitting down at an easel, on which stood a board covered with charcoal paper, she took up a crayon, and began sketching a scheme that she had thought out some time before. Changing it slightly, she gave a maritime tone to it by making the double candle-sticks of gaping sea-horses. It was very effective.

Suddenly, she realized the immense possibilities of her undertaking. She could design everything—tables and chairs, the lockers and sideboard, as well as wall decorations and ceilings.

"He must call it the *Sea-horse*," she thought, and I shall use the funny little monsters as a *Leit-motif*. There will have to be a mermaid or two, and conch-shells——"

For more than an hour she worked, deeply interested.

### XIII

THAT same evening, at Mrs. Borden's dinner, O'Hara announced that he was going to town on business.

"I intend to buy a yacht," he explained, "and must run up to see about it. By the way, Mrs. Wolcott, will you give me the benefit of your taste about the decorations, and so on?"

Maud started, and then she saw how clever was this move. It would protect her from all criticism in the future. "With pleasure," she returned, graciously, "though I know very little about yachts."

Mrs. Borden nodded. "You're in luck, count; anything Mrs. Wolcott touches is sure to be beautiful."

"If I were Maud," Lulu Clarke, observed, nibbling an almond, "I'd ask a commission on such services; she has decorated half the ball-rooms of Barport—think what the professionals would have asked for the designs she made for me, or for Meta."

Maud laughed. "All right; only, I don't know what they would have asked. You may find out and pay me, if you like, Lulu."

"I know how much they charge for a yacht, Paynter—" he named the sum his friend had paid, adding, "mine's smaller, though. Mrs. Wolcott, I won't pay you more than half that."

Every one laughed, as Maud nodded. "Agreed. You are all witnesses!" O'Hara's keen blue eyes held hers for a fraction of a second, and then she turned away.

After dinner, she told him of her plan. "You must call it the *Sea-horse*, for I'm full of equine ideas."

Not a word further was said of the commission; that was understood.

After dinner, Lady Arkney, who was going away the next day, danced a sword-dance over crossed sticks, Maud sang, and Bijou Mott played.

"Bijou really looks quite intelligent when he plays Grieg," Lulu commented, fanning herself, lazily. "Funny, isn't it?"

Bijou heard her, and frowned angrily. When he ceased playing, she laughed.

"I say, Bijou, did I hurt your feelings?"

"Mine? Not so, good child. But it is so stupid of you to chatter when Grieg is being played!"

"Thanks. Is Grieg so much better than other people?"

"He is to me. He's such a healthy, unspoiled, fresh-air chap. It's like drinking cold water to hear him."

Lulu laughed. "I can always get a rise out of Bijou when he's musically inclined," she explained, to no one in particular. "What's Chopin like, Bijou?"

"Like a hothouse; delicious and—weakening. But I'm not going to dance to your pipe any more, my lady."

He rose, and sauntered out through a window to the marble terrace, on which several couples were walking.

"Bijou is too tiresome when he tries to be serious," Mrs. Clarke remarked to Van Peele, who sat by her, in an

obvious ill-humor. "He makes me quite tired, doesn't he you?"

"Oh, me! Everything makes me tired, Lu."

She looked at him, fixedly. She had known him all her life, and a short but intense flirtation a few years before had thrown a new and keener light on his character.

"What's wrong, Van?" she asked, gravely.

"Nothing; oh, nothing, really—only, I'm in a brute of a temper. Let's go outside."

"A tempting offer—to go outside with a man in a brute of a temper! Well, never mind; I was always a friend in need."

She rose, and they joined the saunterers on the terrace.

Van was in a mood bordering on despair, and he wished to tell some one about it. Lulu was a good sort, he thought, though he was glad she was not his wife, and she understood things at half a word. He looked down at her small, smooth head, with its circlet of turquoises and diamonds, and hesitated. After all, what could he say, except that he was engaged to one girl, in love with another, and too great a coward to give up either? Lulu, he knew, would put it before him, with the ease and clearness of the unconcerned, that what he must do was to make his choice. And this was just what he could not do. He needed no one to tell him that he was behaving abominably toward Evelyn, that Pauline was perfectly right in her attitude; he neither needed nor wished any one to tell him these things—they would be unpleasant to hear.

He walked along moodily, staring at the ground. Suddenly, Lulu said: "Van, when are you going to be married?"

"Oh, in January, I suppose."

"Some one said, in October."

"Some one's an ass."

"As to that, most people are; but—Van, you and I are old pals—whom are you in love with?"

"My good Lulu, that's rather an insulting question, isn't it?"

"My good Van, it is. But I do so want to know! It isn't by any chance—*me*—is it?"

He burst out laughing. "No, thank God."

"So, there is some one? Not Lady Arkney?"

"Lady Arkney! She's old enough to be my mother."

"Hush! Walls have ears. Well?"

"Well, it's no one you know, and I'm the most wretched fellow alive, Lulu. Don't laugh."

"I'm not going to laugh, Van. Not a shop-girl?"

"No. But—a farmer's daughter. When I met her, she was teaching school in Cambridge."

Mrs. Clarke showed no surprise. "Was she? So, she must be well educated."

"She's a lady," he returned, shortly.

"Then, why don't you marry her?"

"Because I'm a fool, Lulu. Because I'm too poor to marry a poor girl, being such a fine gentleman that I don't know how to work."

"Nonsense! You have studied law."

"Oh, yes; and I have an office. It costs me about eight hundred dollars a year."

"What's her name, Van, and where does she live?"

"Pauline Birch. She lives with an uncle, on a farm out Bridgeton way."

"Does she—care for you?"

He burst into a short laugh. "I'm sure I don't know. She has been good enough to say so on one or two occasions, but——"

"If you can't decide to marry her and stand the racket, I really don't see what the poor girl can do."

Van was silent. He was ashamed to tell her what he had wanted to do.

Lulu was interested; she liked Van, and she enjoyed playing the ministering angel to mental sufferers.

"Van—shall I go and see her? I mean, make friends with her?"

"No, no! for goodness' sake, don't do anything of that kind! We had it all out the other day, and—I left. If Evelyn would marry me in October,



as I wanted her to, everything would straighten out."

"A pleasing prospect for Evelyn! Why don't you brace up and tell your father? He could give you an allowance."

"You don't know my father! He's perfectly mad in some ways, and among them is the way he adores Evelyn. He'd never forgive me for—"

"I know. Why don't you tell Evelyn, and make her turn you down? She's a rather good sort, and I'm sure she'd do it."

As she spoke, they turned a corner of the terrace, and came on the subject of their remarks, who was standing with the Count de Pouence. The girl's face was flushed, her eyes were angry, and, before she observed the approach of Peele and Mrs. Clarke, she said, distinctly, "Evidently, Monsieur de Pouence, you have forgotten one little fact—that of my engagement to Mr. Peele."

"You see? That's the way decent people look at it," Van remarked, savagely, as they passed on.

Lulu was silent. She herself had a great and wonderful talent for flirtation, which she regarded as a fine art, but she understood and respected Evelyn's point of view; and, suddenly, she felt a kind of loathing, not alone for the man's weakness, but for his slack sense of honor.

"I'm going now," she said, sharply. "Think I'll go to bed at a reasonable hour to-night; I'm tired."

#### XIV

LULU CLARKE had had, among other flirtations, a charming one with Ned Peele. He was forty-four at the time, and she was twenty-nine, a difference in age that lent great charm to the affair. It had been a flowery, larky, esthetic game, and it had died away as gracefully as a curve of smoke against a clear sky—and it left no scars, no bitterness.

On the day following her talk with

Van, Lulu sent a servant with a note to the elder Peele, asking him to call on her that afternoon, adding that she wished to see him about something important.

She received him in the little room where an open fire always burned, even when electric fans high up out of sight churned the air into coolness. "I am a fire-worshiper," she used to say; "fire inspires me as champagne does other women."

When Peele came in, she was sitting in a chair by the hearth, the flames dancing gaily over her golden-brown gown.

"Thanks for coming," she said, without rising, but smiling up at him. "I'm glad it's raining. I love rain outside, and this"—nodding at the fire—"inside. Sit down."

Peele obeyed, and, after looking at her for a few minutes in silence, said, with a meditative air, "I wonder why I ever fell out of love with you, Lulu?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Ned. It wouldn't have been a bad move to marry me, would it?"

"You wouldn't have had me."

"Oh, wouldn't I! That's all you know about it. As a matter of fact, I should have liked nothing better. However, *tempi passati*, Ned—what do you think about Van?"

He looked at her, thoughtfully. "About Van? In what way do you mean?"

"I mean—don't you think something's wrong with him?"

"No; not now. He had some trifling debts, which I, as *père noble*, of course, paid. He's all right since then."

"He and I had a talk last night at the Bordens', and he didn't at all give me the impression of being all right."

"In that case, you know more than I do, Lulu. I was never in his confidence." He spoke a little sadly.

"Oh, as to confidences, I am not saying he told me anything—"

"He did, however; people do tell you things, Lulu—I don't just know why."

"I know why; because I am really

interested in them. And, then, I don't give things away, you know."

"I know. Well? You sent for me, so you are going to tell me something."

Lulu hesitated, looking at him, in doubt as to what would be the best move to make. She was a thorough Jesuit in her views of ends and means, and she was convinced that the way to help her old playfellow out of his trouble would be to make a clever move with his father. In case of success, Van would forgive her betrayal; in case of failure, never. And, studying Peele's quiet, waiting expression, considering the contradictions in his facial lines, she was puzzled.

"Ned," she said, at length, "I told you, a moment ago, that I never gave people away. Well, now, I am going to give Van away to you."

Peele looked up. "Don't, Lulu."

"But the poor boy is in a very tight place, and only you can help him."

"Then, let him tell me, himself."

She shook her head. "He is afraid to."

Peele's face darkened. "What have I ever done to my children that they should be afraid of me?"

"It isn't anything that you've done; it's something far harder to get over than that, Ned—it's what you are."

He was puzzled. "What I *am*? I'm like Snug, the Weaver—as other men are."

"No, you're not. You are the one man I know whose principles are built on rock—the *one* man."

"My dear child, you are dreaming! When you are my age, you'll know that most people are much better than they seem; on the whole, the world grows better as it grows older. And as for me—what have I ever done worth doing?"

He rose and walked to the window.

"My life, open to every eye, lies behind me—banal, foolish, useless. A poor man, I have lived like a rich one; a man with some brains, I have lived like a fool; and now, at forty-six, there is not one person in the world who cares a button for me—not even my own children."

She was silenced. This was not what she had expected, and it almost frightened her.

After a pause, she said, gently: "You exaggerate. I know several people who are very fond of you—to mention one, Evelyn Quincy; and then—Rosebud!"

He turned, smiling. "Yes; Evelyn, were she not to marry my son, could be, I think, my friend. And as to Rosebud, if she could have heard me just now, she would have thought her grandpapa more senile than necessary, even at his advanced age. *Allons*, in view of my rock-bound principles, what were you going to tell me?"

"This. Evelyn could be your friend, if you wished her to. I mean, I don't think Van wants to marry her."

There was a short, vivid silence; then: "You *know* he doesn't want to! The scoun—he has told you so."

"Yes, he has. I've been sure, for weeks, that he was unhappy, and I made him tell me."

She leaned back in her chair, her elbows on its arms, the tips of her pointed fingers pressed together, and looked at him.

"Is it you?" he asked, briefly.

"No; and, if you come down on him, you betray me——"

"Who is it?"

"It's a poor girl, of no family. Her name—no, I won't tell you her name."

"Some 'sales-lady,' I suppose. This is delightful news!"

"He could hardly help falling in love with her, I imagine. And that's all the poor boy's done, thus far."

"He is engaged to Evelyn Quincy, a girl as far above him as the stars, a woman of so fine a nature that I never understood her consenting to marry—my son. And he is—" He broke off, abruptly.

"Just look a bit from Evelyn's point of view, like a sensible man, and you'll realize that it's a precious good thing we found out in time. Imagine Evelyn as the wife of a man who loves another woman!"

"Imagine Evelyn Quincy being—jilted!"

"There's no question of her being

jilted, Ned. She must be told, and she'll do all the jilting necessary."

He groaned. "But, good heavens, she loves him!"

Lulu leaned over, and laid her hand on his arm. "Are you so sure of that?" she asked, slowly.

He started, and then shook his head. "Perfectly sure. Otherwise, why should she have accepted him? She is rich, and he is a poor man."

"People have been known to change. If you remember, she refused to marry him in October."

"On her mother's account. Oh, this is dreadful!"

He rose again, and took her hand. "Thank you for telling me. I'll see what is to be done."

"But you mustn't do anything now; you are too angry. And what can you do? The best thing is to let her, Evelyn, know at once, without telling her that we know."

"That is impossible. I'll look up Van, and talk to him."

"No; you would quarrel, and you must not do that. You think he isn't fond of you, but he is. And he is your only son. Listen; will you let me undertake it?"

"But how?"

"I don't know, yet. But I'll think of some way, and tell you about it. Mind you, I know the other girl's name, and where she lives."

"Van will tell me."

"No, he won't. You'd irritate him, and, when he's angry, he's as obstinate as a mule. I'm dining alone to-night; come and dine with me."

He hesitated. "Very well. You may be right. Good-bye."

An hour later, she received this note from him:

DEAR LULU:

If she wants him, she shall have him. Before you do anything, I must see her and find out. God grant that you are right—that she no longer cares.

E. L. P.

## XV

EVELYN and grandpapa—as Peele had come to be known to his friends—

set off, at about five that afternoon, for a tramp out to the Point Light. Both were good walkers, and, as most of their friends lived on the principle that carriages were made before feet, they were much thrown on each other for companionship in this inexpensive sport.

The Point Light lies far out at the end of a narrow spit of land, to the south of the town, and, on the southern edge of the little cape, there is a rough, rocky road, the view from which, in coming landward, is particularly fine.

This expedition was a favorite with Evelyn. "I shall be glad to see Silas and his old woman again," she said, as they left the highway and started up the steep path leading to the road on the cliff. "It is a long time since we've seen them."

"Yes," he returned, with an effort, looking at her, "it must be two months."

She wore a small, flat, black, straw hat, with a grass-green veil hanging loosely from its brim, and a well-cut blue skirt and jacket. The effort of climbing had brought a bright color to her cheeks, and her little lorgnon, without which she could see almost nothing, gleamed in the sun, as she gazed through it at the tumbling sea to the right.

Looking at her, Peele swore to himself that, come what might, she should have Van if she wanted him. Van was a vacillating fool, who had been in love half-a-dozen times already; he would get over this infatuation, as he had got over the others; and, surely, once safely married, even he would appreciate the prize he had won.

"Tell me about mama," the girl said, suddenly, when he had reached this point in his reflections; "unless you—mind?"

"No, my dear, I do not mind. What shall I tell you? I met her at dancing-school. She was, I think, ten years old, and she wore a pink ribbon like a butterfly on top of her head. She turned in her toes, and she



used to cry when the teacher corrected her."

"Poor little mammy!"

"Yes. Then, for some reason, she stopped coming, and, when I next saw her, she was fifteen. The pink butterfly was gone, but the curls still hung down her back. We used to ride together in the mornings, in the Park. Her horse's name was Zuleika. When she galloped, the curls flew out behind. I determined then that I'd marry her. But *l'homme propose!* Your grandparents went abroad that year, and Alice disappeared again. When she came back, she was a 'young lady,' and we used to dance together."

He broke off, and gazed absently at the sea.

"And papa?" asked the girl, gently.

"Your father had been in London, at the embassy. After he came, I had no hope."

"Then, you never tried?"

"Oh, yes. One tries even when one's hopeless. She cried, the dear! So did I. You ask *her* about it."

"I did, the other day. It was interesting to me, Mr. Peele; you are Van's father, you know."

"Yes. Your interest is a tardy consolation. And what did Alice tell you?"

"Nothing. She seemed to think she mustn't. Mama is old-fashioned."

"She is right, my dear; but she does not realize how fond you and I are of each other."

The road wound about the cliff, dipping down, climbing up, through cuttings in the rock, where, in the meager earth, only moss and blackberries grew.

"There's the light!" Evelyn said, suddenly.

"What a pretty place it is! Have you ever thought how delightful it must be to live for one's self—I mean, for one's own family, and not for a lot of half-strangers?"

"Yes. But we are used to a crowd, and you young things would grow melancholy in solitude."

There was a garden at the foot of

the lighthouse, and in it they found the keeper and his wife, busy cutting asters and making them into bunches.

"To-morrow is the anniversary of our son's death," Silas explained to the visitors; "the flowers are for his grave."

He spoke almost gaily; forty years had done their work—the son, unforgotten, was no longer mourned.

Evelyn sat down and looked around. "Have you some buttermilk for me?" she asked; and the old woman hurried into the little house.

Peele stood still, listening to the silence. It seemed to him to make a great, almost deafening noise. Bees hummed, the waves boomed softly on the rocks below, a canary trilled in its cage hanging in the sun outside the door.

"Are you never lonely?" he asked old Silas, who had taken off his ragged straw hat and was wiping his brow with a blue handkerchief.

"Lonely? for what? I've got my old woman, and she's got me, and we've got our work."

The old woman hobbled out, a tall glass full of buttermilk in her hand.

Evelyn drank it slowly; her near-sighted eyes were vague while Silas told the news. They had a new calf; the inspector's boat had been there the week before, and during the Winter the old man was to have an assistant. Their potatoes were finer than they had ever been before. And the waves boomed, the bees hummed, and the vibrant quiet fell on the girl like a charm. She wished that it could last; that all the rest were a dream; that she had never known any other life.

And Peele, watching her, read her thoughts. He smiled a little sadly, as he realized their fleeting character. She was of a deeper nature than most of the girls of her age, but the rackety life they led was more or less in her blood; solitude would drive her mad.

When, at length, they had said good-bye to the contented old people in their garden, and started toward home, it occurred to him suddenly that he had, as yet, said not a word of that, to

say which he had sought her. He did not know how to begin, and was casting about in his mind for an opening phrase, when she herself unconsciously paved his way by saying:

"Mama had a picture of you, Mr. Peele, and she has given it to me. You are leaning on a broken pillar, with your feet crossed; but it is a dear picture."

"And she kept it all these years! I must come and talk to her about it, Evy."

"Were you very unhappy when it was taken? You look so melancholy!"

"My dear, I was on the point of insanity, of suicide, of going to the devil. She had refused me a week before. And I married six months later!"

"What an anticlimax!"

"Wasn't it? It's one that frequently occurs, however. Your father and mother were very happy, which, I am glad to say, was, even at the beginning, a comfort to me. If, by any chance, she had married me, loving Charlie—that would have been the tragedy."

Evelyn nodded. "Oh, yes, of course. That's what makes marrying such a serious matter. No one thinks anything of a broken engagement, but married people are supposed never to change their minds—which is absurd."

"You're right. But breaking an engagement is never an easy matter; after all, no one likes to break one's word."

"I don't think people particularly mind breaking that particular word," she returned, coolly. "I shouldn't hesitate a minute, personally."

And that, though she said nothing further, was enough. She still loved Van, though God only knew why, and Van she should have.

## XVI

DEAR MRS. WOLCOTT:

Jim Lee has just been offered the first secretaryship at Paris, and he wishes to get rid of *Fly-by-night*. How would it do for me? He has asked me, and any friends I like to bring, to luncheon on board, to-day. I

wonder whether you and Mr. Wolcott would come? We could talk the matter over, at least.

Sincerely yours,  
JAMES O'HARA.

Maud read the note through twice, and then, having torn it into bits and tossed it into the waste-basket, she went into the next room, where her husband was still lingering over his breakfast.

"Have you heard about Jim Lee?" she asked.

"No. Not dead?"

"He's going to Paris as first secretary, and wants O'Hara to buy his yacht. They want us to lunch on board to-day. You know I've promised to help O'Hara with his decorations."

"All right; I've nothing to do. I thought the count was going to build a boat?"

"He was; but he seems impatient, and I should think nothing could be better than the *Fly-by-night*."

With a strong effort she kept out of her voice the relief she felt. The sooner O'Hara's yacht materialized, the better for her; the sheaf of bills was growing, and, though the amount of all of them together was ridiculously small, she had no idea how to pay them. O'Hara must buy the *Fly-by-night*.

She went up-stairs, and, locking herself in her studio, worked hard at her design for the sideboard of the as yet non-existent *Sea-horse*.

As she labored, she heard a loud cry of delight from the room opposite the studio. It was, she knew, her father, come to make his daily visit to Rosebud.

Maud had, since Peele's reproof of her, never ventured to broach the subject of the inheritance, and, ashamed of her submission, had made an ostentatious show of never naming the child to her grandfather, or of throwing the two together.

Peele, she knew, observed her changed manner; but, beyond a certain twinkle in his eye when, once in a while, he asked her some question about the little girl, he never referred to it.

Every morning, he rode over from the rooms he had occupied for the past twenty years, and, going straight upstairs, spent a merry hour with the child, who adored him. Beyond having paid his son's debts and given his daughter the promised necklace, the only difference in his way of living, apparent to the casual observer, was that he now had two saddle-horses instead of one, and looked several years younger.

Bijou Mott, no favorite of Peele's, was the only person who read aright this continued simplicity of living. "It's shyness, my children," Bijou told some people at the Casino, one day; "he is too proud to show by any change that his old condition was not perfectly delightful."

As Harry and Maud Wolcott left the house to step into their carriage, at twelve o'clock that day, Peele and Rosebud came out of the side-door.

"I'm going to take her for a canter, Maud," Peele said. "Where are you off to?"

"To luncheon on the *Fly-by-night*," Maud returned, quickly. "Good-bye."

As the carriage made a turn in the avenue, Maud, looking back, saw her father, with the baby on the saddle before him, cantering slowly along under the trees.

"Papa is simply mad about her," she observed, comfortably. "I believe he was so unpleasant merely to get a rise out of me."

"Papa is a merry old boy," Harry returned. "We'll all dance at his wedding yet."

At the landing, they found not only the *Fly-by-night's* launch awaiting them, but, comfortably seated on a cushion in its stern, Bijou Mott.

"I know you'll rejoice to hear that I'm going, too," he called, as they approached.

"Delighted! Who invited you—O'Hara or Jim?"

"Who invited you, my son?"

"Jim," returned Harry, in good faith, as the launch rushed away with them.

"Well, no one invited me; 'I just

comed.' Saw the launch, you know, asked Frank, here, for whom he was waiting, and, when I heard it was you, I couldn't resist. How do you think Jim'll take it? Joy sometimes kills, you know."

Maud laughed. "He won't mind, Bijou. No one ever minds you. Who was the pretty woman I saw you with yesterday in a teuf-teuf?"

Bijou laughed. "Isn't she a corker! It's a Mrs. Feiling—first name, Kathleen."

"Feiling? Feiling? Where have I heard that name, Harry?"

Maud knitted her brows, and took her chin between her thumb and finger, a trick of hers when she was puzzled.

"I don't know, I'm sure. Who is she, Bijou, and where did you meet her?"

Bijou lighted a cigarette. "She's the widow of a petroleum-chap, a sort of protégée of Oliphant's; originally from some place in Iowa. Just imagine anything as pretty as that coming from Iowa!"

"Yes; but where did you meet her?"

"I saved her life, the day before yesterday. Runaway teuf-teuf, drove of cows, terrified lady, valorous knight. Most awfully grateful, poor little thing!—velvet for Bijou."

"I see the finger of Providence in this, Bijou," Maud said, as they reached the yacht, and he helped her to step out on the landing-stage.

Bijou laughed. "So does—" he began, and then broke off short. Barney's proposal was very funny, but not quite the thing to tell.

Jim Lee, known as the thinnest man, outside the dime-museum business, in America, met them at the top of the ladder, and, as they stood talking with him, O'Hara came out of the cabin.

"So you're going off to gay Paree, Jim!" Bijou began. "Yes, it's me—I. Mrs. Wolcott brought me. Hello, Graf; you here?"

O'Hara, who hated Bijou for the continuous changes the young man rang on his unfortunate title, looked very much surprised at his enemy's appearance, but said nothing. His po-

sition was not yet well enough assured to permit him the luxury of rudeness. There's no one so painfully polite as your parvenu.

Maud announced at once that she, as O'Hara's artistic counsel, had come to give her advice for or against the purchase of the yacht, and, after luncheon, she, O'Hara and Lee made a visit of inspection over the trim little craft.

"Only four cabins, Mr. O'Hara," she said, disapprovingly.

"Yes, but I like the saloons, don't you?"

Maud did, and her imagination beheld them already stripped of their somewhat flashy furnishings, and transformed, under her direction, into the most exquisite little rooms on the high seas.

Lee didn't particularly care whether O'Hara bought his yacht or not; some one else was sure to snap it up, in the event of the Irishman's refusing, but he patiently showed all his devices for making the little available space go a great way, explained the ventilating system, and so on, very carefully.

It was nearly four o'clock when the launch was ordered, to take the guests back to the landing, and, while Lee gave some directions to the skipper, Maud, unheard by the others, managed to say to O'Hara, "You must take it; it will be perfect."

And O'Hara, agreeing with her, at once told her that, for his part, the matter was settled.

"I envy you, *contino*," Bijou called back to O'Hara, who stayed on board with Lee. "*Se vuol ballare, signor contino*—"

"What do you mean by that, Bijou?" Maud asked.

"I mean that he is lucky, in that, when he wishes to dance, he always has some one to pipe for him."

## XVII

KATHLEEN FEILING's butler was a Swede, her two footmen were English, her maid was French, her cook was an

Italian, her baby's nurse was a Japanese; and yet, in spite of these advantages, she was nobody. No one knew her—nobody but a few other outsiders, some of them a trifle nearer the charmed circle than she—delightful people, many of them, with money enough to live delightful lives, but for the ever-present, embittering fact that they *were* outsiders.

Mrs. Feiling liked some of these nobodies, but she would not allow herself to be content with their society, for she was, she believed, ambitious.

It had seemed a fine thing, some years ago, to her, the pretty daughter of a poor Baptist clergyman in Theodore, Iowa, to marry Jeremy Feiling, the millionaire; a fine thing to leave Iowa, and go to a small commercial city in Pennsylvania, and, by virtue of her beauty and her wealth, to lord it over the other women in the town.

Then, Jeremy had died, and, though she honestly missed him and his clumsy kindness, it had seemed a fine thing to be a rich young widow, and to travel in Europe with a courier to do the talking for her, and to show her the relics and ruins of old days, of which she knew nothing whatever. Clothes were better, and the *rue de la Paix* had more charm for her than all of Rome together.

She came home at the end of two years, with the amazing air of distinction that most pretty Americans manage to pick up abroad, even when their only life has been that of hotels, their only acquaintances wanderers like themselves.

All these things had been splendid; what was to crown the splendor? Social success, of course; and Barport's locks are the easiest to force with a golden jimmy such as hers.

So, a furnished villa was rented for the season, carriages were bought in New York, servants were hired at the best bureau in that city, and the newly pieced-together household settled down in its strange nest, as best it could.

The McCallons, the Porters and the Fryes were all very kind to her, but they would not do, and the little woman

literally did not know one member of the charmed circle that she longed to enter. She saw these people on the drive, at a charity bazaar, at the exhibition of Clissack's pictures, at the Horse Show; some of them stared at her, for she was unusually pretty, but none of them was sufficiently imbued with the missionary spirit to take her by the hand, and lead her out of the darkness into the fold.

She was very lonely, wandering about her house, staring occasionally at the quaint things its real owners had collected, playing on the piano, badly, trying to impress her servants, and, failing, half-wishing she had stayed in Iowa.

Then came the blessed accident, when, out of a cloud of furious beasts, a man appeared, jumped up behind her auto, tumbled across to the front seat and, grabbing the brake, brought the machine to a sudden standstill that almost threw them both out. And the man was, of all others, Bijou Mott, the gilded youth of whose doings *Our Village* gave a circumstantial account every Saturday; the man whose engagement was reported, every now and then, to some star of the first magnitude; the man who was the best cotillon-leader in America.

Kathleen's eyes were full of tears—not of fear, as Bijou thought, but of joy, as she thanked him.

He scolded her, gently, for venturing so far alone, asked her if she felt faint, and then drove her home himself.

By a happy dispensation, it was tea-time, and Bijou, interested and curious, promptly accepting her invitation, which she made as offhand as possible, went into her house with her, and stayed for nearly an hour.

The next morning, a box of violets arrived, and the card, bearing the name, Mr. Charles Mott, lay all day upon a little bronze tray on the stand near the tea-table. The next afternoon, Mr. Charles Mott called, and on the following evening he dined at "Bel Asile."

Kathleen wore a little evening gown of pale, rose-colored chiffon, covered

with Irish point-lace. It was a gown of the very grandest toilette, but this the blissful Kathleen did not know, and she put it on, and smiled at herself in the glass as she went downstairs.

Bijou, who knew a thing or two about lace, gasped when he saw his hostess. He gasped again—but, like Brer Rabbit, internally—when, a few minutes after his arrival, the solemn, straw-colored butler announced dinner. Mrs. Feiling rose at once and took his arm. It was a tête-à-tête dinner. Bijou's first thought was that Mrs. Feiling must be "pretty fly," but before ten minutes had passed he saw his mistake.

She was a remarkably pretty, gay little woman, with an ignorance, apparently, of everything under the sun, that positively made his hair stand on end. She thought the Persian rugs faded; she was going to get little gilt angels to catch up the heavy, velvet curtains; she thought the Capo de Monte figurines "horrid," and didn't see how any one could admire the old Chelsea cups and saucers that were locked away in a glass cabinet in the drawing-room.

The dinner was good; evidently, the cook knew his business; the butler served perfectly; the wines were all wrong.

After dinner, Kathleen insisted on Bijou's smoking, and gave him a silk pillow to lean against.

At length, he ventured: "I heard about you a while ago, Mrs. Feiling, from Barney."

"Barney? Horrid thing! What a fuss he makes about his nasty little candy-store, doesn't he? I wanted to give a dinner there, and he wouldn't let me, because he said he didn't know me."

"Barney's a bit of a character in his own, quiet way. He's one of our landmarks, you know."

"I don't see what difference his not knowing me makes, even if he is a landmark. I never saw such a shabby little store."

Bijou looked at her, thoughtfully,



the amused smile denied to his bare lips lurking in his eyes.

"Then, why, may I ask, were you so keen on dining there?"

"Oh, because—well—every one does dine there, you know. Do you think me silly?"

"No."

She paused for a few minutes, nervously turning the big rings on her small fingers.

"Mr. Mott, I am so lonely!" she said.

"Not this moment, I hope," he returned.

"No, but—no one seems to want to know me, and I do so want to know people, and be in things."

Bijou was embarrassed. "My dear lady," he murmured, "you are in a strange place."

"That isn't it. Oh, I know. If I came from Philadelphia, or Boston, or Baltimore, and had any friends, it would be easy. People call on each other—in books. Then, they'd say, 'Do you know Mary Jones?' and I'd say, 'She's my cousin. Do you know William Smith?' And it would be done. It's because I come from Iowa, and my husband was a plain man——"

Bijou rose. "Nonsense. I beg your pardon, but look at the people here, whose husbands, or fathers, at least, were plain men. Count O'Hara's father was an Irish peasant who came to America in the steerage, and worked in a mine as a day-laborer. Mrs. Fox's father was a North River captain, a blockade runner in the war. Mrs. Borden's mother was a washerwoman at Fort Leavenworth. You've begun at the wrong end, that's all."

"I didn't know, and I had no one to tell me. You tell me now. Go on, please."

She was so pretty in her priceless gown, the light of the red lamp falling over her!

"Telling you will be of no use. You must have some one to help you. One push, and you're in the thick of it—if—" He broke off.

"Well—if what?"

"If you have plenty of money."

She laughed, relieved. "Oh, I have that; heaps of it."

Bijou knew that a creature as pretty as she, as young, as merry, was bound to be a favorite—at least, with men; he knew also that no man, or number of men, could give her the tiny foothold she must gain, upon which to begin the operations that he himself had suddenly decided to direct. What woman would help him?

The thought of Barney's scheme passed through his head, bringing a smile to his lips. Couldn't some hard-up marchioness be found? No. In such cases, the marchioness herself must do the finding. His only alternative, then, was to interest some curiosity-seeker in the little widow. Lulu Clarke!

He rose. "I have an idea, Mrs. Feiling, and, if you will let me, I'll come the day after to-morrow to tell you about it. Good night."

She smiled up at him. "To-day is my twenty-second birthday; this has been my birthday-party!"

## XVIII

LULU CLARKE had been amazed and disappointed when, instead of dining with her as he had promised, Ned Peele sent her a note of excuse, announcing his sudden departure for New York on business, and warning her to do nothing in the matter of Van and Evelyn, as he himself had decided what course was to be taken, and determined to take it himself. She was curious, vexed, and angry with herself for having betrayed Van to so little purpose. Like the French woman in some old play, she had no vices but many curiosities, and now her forced inactivity in an affair that she had expected to conduct was extremely irksome to her.

One morning, a few days after her interview with Rosebud's grandpapa, she rose suddenly from her chair by the fire, and, ringing, ordered her automobile. Then, she went up-stairs and changed her gown.

It was a beautiful day, a little cool, but brilliant with August sunshine, and the swift movement of the auto quieted her irritated nerves, and brought a smile to her red lips.

She had been one of the first women in America to learn the gentle art of teuf-teufing, and she guided her Mercedes with the greatest ease.

The lane leading to John Birch's farm was very lumpy; Frederic, the chauffeur, did not like it at all, but Mrs. Clarke, preoccupied with her suddenly developed scheme, hardly noticed the jolting.

"Pauline Birch," she said to herself, over and over. For she was going to see Pauline Birch, though how, she had left to chance. She could hardly knock at the door, and say to the girl, "Come out and be inspected."

She was afraid of Ned Peele's indignation at her contemplated act; she was afraid of Van's anger; she must be diplomatic; and, with a little shiver of fear and pleasure, she told herself that diplomacy was her strong point.

The little farm-house, weather-beaten and long unpainted, hidden in its nest of lilacs, now full of neglected, rust-brown plumes, was situated only a hundred feet from the road, but the entrance for wagons was around the corner, and Lulu did not see it.

Stopping the machine, she got out, and, pushing open the low gate, went briskly up the narrow path. The door, in its low-latticed porch, was closed; there was no bell.

With heightened color, Mrs. Clarke doubled up her fist in its thick glove, and gave a couple of vigorous raps on the painted panel.

"Now, when the door opens," she asked herself, "what am I going to say?"

She half-expected to be inspired with something brilliant, but, when the door did open, all she could think of was, "Would you be so kind as to give me a drink of water?"

The plain, middle-aged woman stared at her. "Why, yes, cert'nly," she answered. "Will you step in?"

Lulu followed her, but, when her conductor opened the door of the parlor, she protested. "Oh, please don't bother to open the blinds; I see you are busy. Can't I come into the kitchen with you?"

Mrs. Birch nodded. "Jes' as you like. I'm busy putting up my preserves, an' they're on the fire."

Lulu sniffed delightedly as they entered the low, clean kitchen, the air of which was heavy with a delicious odor.

"How good it looks!" she exclaimed, peering into the big brass pot, in which the fruit was gently simmering.

Mrs. Birch turned, in the act of taking down a jug from a corner cupboard, her stern face softening a little in housewifely gratification.

"Yes, I guess they're going to be real handsome this year. Last year, all my canning was a failure; my peaches an' plums were too soft, an' my jelly wouldn't jell."

"Dear me," murmured Lulu, sympathetically, "how annoying that must have been!"

"It was. I don't know anything so pesky as jelly that won't jell. Keep house yourself, do you?" she added.

Lulu sank into a broom rocking-chair.

"I do. And I wish my cook could see your kitchen."

"Lan's sakes, it's not much to look at now! Ain't your cook clean?"

"Oh, yes, but he—it's a man—is terribly disorderly."

Mrs. Birch wiped the inside of the jug on a crash dish-towel. "For the lan's sake, a *man*!"

She went out of the open door, as she spoke, and Lulu heard the recurring squeak of a pump. It was all great fun, and Mrs. Birch "a dear," but where was Pauline?

The water, poured into a thick glass, was cool and delicious. While her guest was drinking, Mrs. Birch took up a big spoon with fine holes in it, and, skimming the froth off the cooking fruit, shook it into a bowl on the table, around which several wasps

hovered. Plainly, she expected Lulu to go, and that was exactly what that curious lady did not wish to do.

"Thanks so much," she said, however, rising. "You want to go on with your work."

Mrs. Birch had, as it happened, ideas on the subject of hospitality. "Stay a while, if you're tired," she said. "You don't disturb me."

"Thanks; I'm not tired. I came in my automobile. I like it here."

"Well, that beats all! What do you like about a plain, farm-house kitchen?"

"I like the quiet, and the smell of the fruit, and the old clock. Do you live all alone? Is there no one to help you?"

This was an old grievance. "No, I don't live alone. I've a sister-in-law and a niece living with me, but, for all they help me, I'd better have no one."

"You mean, they are idle?"

"Well, Mary is sick; she couldn't do much; but Polly is a fine lady—reads books all day long; studies, too."

Lulu shook her head. "I'd make her help, if I were you."

"No earthly power can make that girl do anything she hasn't got a mind to." Mrs. Birch fished a peach out of her caldron, opened it with a black-handled, three-tined fork, and blew on it. "I can't say Polly's exactly *lazy*. She works hard enough. But her ways ain't mine, and her work don't do me any good. I've no call to tell these things to a stranger, though," she added, shortly, as she tasted the peach and burnt her lip.

"Well, it hasn't done any harm, and it does one good to unburden one's heart, sometimes. Now, good-bye, and thank you for a very agreeable half-hour."

Polly being evidently out of the way, there was no use in staying, and so, insisting that her hostess should not again leave her work, Mrs. Clarke went out into the "back yard," and started around the house on the narrow board path. As she turned the corner, she stood still, for there, in a rocking-chair on the grass under an apple-

tree, sat a girl whom she knew at a glance to be Pauline.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, a little awkwardly; but the girl looked up calmly from her book.

"Did I frighten you, Mrs. Clarke?" she asked, quietly.

"How—how do you know my name?"

"How do you know mine? For you do know it. Yes, I am Pauline Birch. Am I as dreadful as you expected?"

Lulu stood quite still, too much surprised to find words. The girl was altogether unlike what she had imagined. Her pale, delicate face was not pretty, except for its dark eyes; she had no figure whatever, and she looked rather frail. But, on the other hand, she was not at all awed by her unlooked-for visitor, and a smile, that was almost mocking, played around her mouth.

But Lulu, though taken aback, was not baffled.

"You evidently think I've come as an enemy, but you are mistaken. Van himself told me about you, and I'm anxious to help him."

"No one can help him; he is the only person that could, and he's too weak."

"Too weak! Well, really——"

"Oh, yes, I know I ought to be thankful to marry him on the sly, to do everything he wants me to do; but I *won't*. If he wants to marry me, he has got to acknowledge me, at once and to everybody."

Lulu stared with frank curiosity at the sharp young woman.

"It's very easy to say that," she said, at length; "but what's he to do about Evelyn Quincy?"

"Evelyn Quincy? Who's she?"

"The girl he's been engaged to for a year and a half. Didn't you know it?"

"No, I didn't. If I had known it, I'd have sent him away at once."

And Lulu was certain the girl meant it. "Look here," she began, suddenly; "I like you. I wish you'd tell me your side. Van and I have been friends



ever since we were babies, and I know him. I believe you'd be a good wife for him."

Pauline laughed. "Do you? Because I'm mulish, you mean? Oh, I heard Aunt Jenny telling you about me; the windows are open."

Lulu felt strongly drawn to this girl. She held out her hand. "Let's be friends," she said. "You need a friend who understands you."

"You understand everybody, don't you? A minute ago, you were sympathizing with Aunt Jenny!"

The sneer irritated Lulu. "Very well; as you like. Only, mind you, if you *do* marry Van, you will have to make a fight for it, and I might have been useful to you. And—you may not know that his father is a very rich man."

The girl flushed. "How dare you tell me that! As if I cared a pin about money! I tell you, if I could *trust* Van, I'd——"

Lulu softened. "Then, you do care for him! I am glad. You've not been very nice to me, but I'm going to do what I can to help you, anyhow."

"I don't want your help, or any one's, thank you. I am not going to marry Mr. Peele."

"Well—I'll tell him I've seen you, and that you bit my head off! Good-bye!"

She went away at a spanking speed, and Pauline took up her book. It was a treatise of Fröbel's, on the education of little children.

## XIX

VAN BUREN PEELE's lines had not, of late, been cast in the pleasant places to which he considered himself entitled. Since his interview with Lulu Clarke, the unbeautiful aspect of his own conduct had become disagreeably distinct to him, and his inability to decide on either of the two courses open to him began to look rather more than the mere sentimental weakness he had hitherto regarded it.

And Pauline was no help at all to

him; instead of telling him that he was afraid of hurting Evelyn—a course she could hardly have taken, for he had not yet told her of his relations with Miss Quincy—instead of smoothing away the feeling that he was behaving like a cad, instead of strengthening him by tender assurances of her inability to live without him, she remained obstinate, and not only refused to marry him without his father's consent, but also intimidated, by her unbroken silence, that she was perfectly capable of existing, unsunned by the light of his countenance.

Van was not a bad man, and that he possessed possibilities for accomplishing important things, his rather incongruous chin bore witness. If he was a cad, he had at least the grace to be a most unhappy one, and everybody knows that cads are, as a rule, endowed with blissful self-satisfaction.

Two days after his abrupt confession to Mrs. Clarke, while Van was sitting at his writing-table, answering the morning's invitations and notes, Edwin Peele came into the room.

"Morning, Van," the elder man began, briskly; "what's wrong? You look very ill."

"I'm all right, father, though a bit seedy after dancing till daylight at the Coopers'. What nonsense it is, this staying up all night! It would stop if the women realized how they look when daylight comes."

"I went home at one—prudence is the better part of valor; but, then, I am a grandparent, and must coddle my failing health."

He sat down, and his son looked at him, with half-envious wonder. "Yes, you must! Failing health, indeed! You look as young as Harry, and he's only thirty-seven."

"Harry's losing his hair," returned Peele, with a satisfaction not untouched with malice.

"Well, I might as well tell you why I've come to look you up so early. I'm off to Japan in November, Van, and I wish to see you and Evelyn married before I go."

"To Japan!"

"Yes, with Winthrop Vail. We shall travel slowly; he's on the trail of another book, so I sha'n't be back much inside of two years."

Van had dropped his pen on the note he had been writing, and his first thought was that he'd have to write over again all that rot about "being delighted," etc. Then, he collected his senses.

"Awfully sudden, isn't it?" he asked, looking up.

Peele smiled. "Yes. I've always wanted to see Japan, you know, and Vail is a good traveler. And, of course, I want to be at your wedding."

"But Evelyn? She won't like being married, you know, and the other day you yourself said that you wouldn't have her married."

"I know, but circumstances alter cases. I'll undertake to persuade Evelyn. Why, what's the matter? You look *sorry*."

Van laughed, feebly. "Not I. Only, I doubt your success."

He drew a deep breath, and, rising, went to a little cupboard in a corner and unlocked it. He took from it a couple of glasses, a bottle of whiskey and a siphon.

The die was cast; that another than he had cast it mattered little. It was a relief that the whole thing was taken out of his hands.

"Well, here's luck to you," he said, a moment later, holding up his glass. "*Prosit!*"

The two men struck their glasses together and then drained them, each with a feeling of content that the difficult stroke was made.

A few minutes later, Edwin, having promised to give his son a furnished house as a wedding gift, took his leave, and, though it was still early, made his way, by the grassy lane, to the path at the side of the Quincy place.

Miss Quincy was not yet down, but her mother, the butler said, was in her boudoir. Peele hesitated, and then decided to go in.

Mrs. Quincy, a pitifully thin woman, with an almost transparent skin and

purple shadows about her gentle eyes, lay wrapped in a delicate Chuddah shawl, on a chair-lounge near an open window.

"I am very glad to see you, Ned," she began, holding out her hand, on which the stones of the handsome rings slipped to the under side as she moved. "Evy is still asleep, resting after the ball."

"Yes; Van tells me that they danced until daylight. How are you to-day, Alice?" He pronounced the name, Italian fashion, in three syllables, as he had always done.

She smiled. "Every day a little weaker; every day a little gladder that the end is coming."

Peele's handsome face softened. "Poor girl!" he said.

There was a moment's silence, and then he added, confidently: "I know you'll approve the reason of my errand, dear old friend. I am going, in November, on a long journey—to Japan."

"And you want Van and Evy to be married before you go! Ah, yes! I approve; for I, too, am going on a long journey, Ned. Evelyn will not like leaving me beforehand, but I shall be happier to leave her surrounded by new interests, living her own life."

"I knew you would say that."

There was a pause, and, before it was broken, the door opened, and Evelyn came in, looking tired and pale.

"Mr. Peele is going to Japan, Evy!" began her mother, as the girl stooped and kissed her.

"To Japan! Oh, no, don't go!"

Peele was surprised and a little startled by the look in the girl's face.

"Please don't go! We need you so, Van and I."

Could she have any idea of Van's faithless folly? Peele kissed her cheek, and then sat down again.

"My dear child, I am immensely pleased and flattered, but—go I must. Winthrop Vail is to write a book on the Japanese bourgeoisie, and I've promised to travel with him. I've come this morning to ask a great favor of you."

"A great favor! What is it?"

She sat down on the edge of her mother's chair-lounge, and, taking one of the thin hands in hers, stroked it gently.

"Dear—you won't send me away without giving me my new daughter?"

"You wish us to be married before you go?"

"Yes," returned her mother; "and, Evy, I want my new son."

Evelyn rose, and walked slowly to Peele's side.

"Very well—father," she said.

It was the first time she had called him by this name, and it touched him deeply. The girl was so much more to him than was his own daughter!

## XX

"Oh, isn't it deadly!" groaned Bijou Mott; "let's open a vein!"

On the little, flower-decked stage stood a young woman in a lemon-colored gown of flimsy silk, singing with a thin, sharp-edged voice Braga's "Angel's Serenade," to the accompaniment of a piano and a violin.

It was a charity entertainment, got up by the townspeople for the benefit of the Children's Hospital, and the "cottagers" had come in full force, a return courtesy for the lucrative presence of the townspeople, a few weeks before, at *their* entertainment for the benefit of the same institution. The young woman in yellow, the daughter of Barport's leading apothecary, was far too genteel to open her mouth, and sang through all but closed lips. Bijou declared that the violin needed greasing.

Hartman's Hall, a rectangular room with white walls and a highly varnished pine balcony that faced the stage, was crowded.

When the young lady stopped wailing at her Maudry—she had learned Italian at a boarding-school—her many friends burst out into what the next morning's *Barport Chronicle* termed "eager applause," and the half-inanimate Bijou groaned softly.

"Be still, Bijou; some of them might hear you," yawned Lulu Clarke, behind her eagle-feather fan.

"*Toutes ces gens sont sourdes,*" quoted the young man. "Take me home, somebody."

"The living-pictures are coming next," returned his other neighbor, Kathleen Feiling. "Don't you want to see them?"

Lulu leaned forward. "I do! I'm sure they'll be something to die for, Mrs. Feiling. Some one told my maid that Mrs. Lane—the 'articulated skeleton'—is to appear as Fair Rosamond!"

Kathleen giggled. It was her first appearance in public with Mrs. Clarke, and she was trembling with excitement.

"I always cry when I'm scared," remarked Bijou; but no one paid any attention to him, so he leaned back in his chair, and, in the ensuing interval, listened to his protégée's conversation with Mrs. Clarke. Lulu had jumped at the chance to make an "adoption," as she called it, and had promptly driven out with Bijou to call on Mrs. Feiling.

Kathleen's delicious prettiness, her simplicity and amazing ignorance, charmed the woman whose beauty she could not eclipse. Moreover, the possibilities of great things rendered possible by the little widow's fortune, which, while not so large as Lulu's own, was a great one, even for Barport, served to interest Mrs. Clarke, and so, much to Kathleen's delight, she was at once asked to go to the townspeople's entertainment with her two new friends.

Lulu was tired of most of the Barport people, and she promised herself great amusement in launching Kathleen into the world for which she naively announced her longing.

Kathleen knew not a word of French, not even the French of the Stratford-atté-bowe variety; she knew no German; she didn't know what Buddhism was; her ideas of history were of the vaguest; she thought Chippendale furniture "horrid," and willow-pattern china "so common."

On the other hand, she knew who of the smart world had married whom;

whose first husband had wedded the divorced wife of whom; she knew that Mr. Dick Chester was the best hand in Baltimore at a mint julep; that ping-pong was going out; that Maud Wolcott's voice was a mezzo-soprano; that, to reduce her size, Meta Fox took the same course of treatment that the German Empress had taken, and that Carolyn Llewellyn used Doctor Dys's bandalettes to smooth the lines about her eyes.

All this was promising, and Lulu—who had, in spite of her parting words to Pauline Birch, found all future action on her part in the matter to be impossible, as Van's marriage to Evelyn was announced for the seventeenth of October—was delighted to find a new fad with which to occupy herself.

Before the hammering behind the curtain had ceased, and the orchestra's somewhat *ad libitum* rendering of one of Richard Strauss's symphonic poems had begun, several men, including Ned Peele, had come to speak to Lulu, and had been introduced to Mrs. Feiling.

Peele, visibly attracted by the little woman, stood leaning against the wall, greatly to the detriment of his coat, until Bijou, at last rising, went off to speak to Mrs. Fox, and the elder man sat down in the vacant chair.

Maud Wolcott, sitting at the opposite side of the aisle, caught sight of her father's handsome, dark head bent courteously toward the stranger, and her anxiety was at once aroused.

"Harry, who is that girl papa's talking to?"

"I don't know. She's a ripper, though. Who's she with? Oh, Lulu! grandpapa seems to be having the time of his life, doesn't he?"

Maud tossed her head, and he went on. "Sweet little grandmama she'd make for Rosebud!"

"How can you be so absurd, Harry!"

"Oh! I thought you imagined he seemed rather taken, and I agreed with you. But, maybe, we are wrong."

Harry's rosy face, the lower part of which had already begun to soften into the vague lines of coming corpu-

lence, smiled soothingly as he spoke. He knew that Maud was tormented with a never-ending terror of her father's suddenly marrying, and, though he was a kind-enough man, he could not resist teasing her. As he spoke, the curtain closed over a strangely conceived living-picture of the Judgment of Paris, and, in the storm of applause that followed, Ned Peele rose and made his way leisurely around to where his daughter sat.

"I'll not go home with you, after all," he said, with a subdued gleam in his eyes. "I've asked some people to go to Barney's with me for a rabbit."

Harry grinned, as his wife mentally expressed it. "Who's the pretty girl, grandpapa?" he asked.

"A friend of Lulu's—a Mrs. Feiling. A most—hum—attractive woman Good-bye. I've found the goats for Rosebud, Maud."

But Maud could not smile back.

Peele had purposely played on her fears, and during the rest of the performance she sat sideways in her chair, her eyes fixed on her troublesome parent, as once more he hung more or less devotedly over Kathleen.

As the two parties left the building, they met, and for a few minutes were carried together by the crowd. Bijou seized this opportunity of telling Maud that her father seemed very much struck by his, Bijou's, discovery. "Gay old bird, is Rosebud's grandpapa," he added, with airy impertinence. "You'll like Mrs. Feiling, Maud; she's really a huge joke."

## XXI

Mrs. Fox was full of envy. The present of her ape, the novelty of her baby-party, had paled beside the triumph that Lulu Clarke was winning with her Western widow.

A few nights after the entertainment at Hartman's Hall, Lulu had given a big dinner, at which Mrs. Feiling, if not the guest of honor, was at least the feature. Ned Peele took

her in to dinner, all the men were amused and delighted with her, and the women owned with astonished grimaces that the get-up of this O. B. was perfection.

"The widdy," as Bijou nicknamed her, was of a very frank nature, and her delight in her new surroundings was too exuberant to be restrained. She told O'Hara, who sat on her other hand, the story of her coming to Barport; of her patient waiting, her dawning doubts, and her depths of despair; "out of which," she added, while every one listened, "Mr. Mott fished me."

Then, she went on to relate the history of her attempted siege of Barney's, and its failure.

"When I went in the other night, to Mr. Peele's supper," she continued, with a gay laugh, "I thought he was going to have a fit. *Barney*, I mean, not Mr. Peele."

Maud watched her, anxiously, from her place opposite. Her father seemed really immensely taken with the funny little woman, and Maud, who had absolutely no sense of humor, could not guess the wicked enjoyment which Peele was deriving from the expression of his daughter's face.

After dinner, Maud sang. She had a smooth, rather heavy, mezzo-soprano voice, well trained and fully under control. When she had finished Hahn's "D'une Prison," Mrs. Feiling, coming to the piano and smiling like a happy child, said: "How beautifully you sing! Know any coon songs?"

Maud did not, and, it appearing that Kathleen did, the latter, well pleased, sat down to do her best.

"I can't play much," she explained, as she began.

And, indeed, she played so badly, muddling the notes and losing her place, that Bijou at last offered to accompany her.

"You can't play at all," he assured her, gravely.

But, if she couldn't play, she could sing. One of the songs had a laugh in it, and, to every one's sur-

prise, Mrs. Feiling threw back her head, and, opening her mouth as wide as possible, brought out from the depths of her throat the cleverest imitation of a real Southern darkey's chuckling, gulping laugh that any of them had ever heard.

The applause was great, and, nothing loath, Kathleen repeated the song. "I can do a lot of animals, too," she added. "Shall I?"

She was a curiosity, and, as such, could be admired by the women as well as by the men. There was a crowd around the piano as she "went through her tricks."

She imitated a donkey and a parrot; she gave a conversation between a King Charles spaniel and a St. Bernard, and wound up with "doing" a monkey—first, a homesick, caged one, her tongue pulling her upper lip down to a formidable length, her eyes terribly crossed, and then a Joyful Jocko, grinning and gibbering in a way that convulsed every one.

A few minutes later, as she stood, her back to the others, talking to Bijou, she suddenly twisted her face into the most absurd libel of O'Hara's, and said, in his very voice, "Yes, I call it the *Sea-horse*."

"For heaven's sake, be careful!" whispered Bijou, shrieking with laughter; "don't take to doing *people*, or they'll turn you out."

But she was in no danger of being turned out, and she knew it. Whether it was simplicity or cunning, she never knew; but, instead of proceeding on her social way at a snail's prudent pace, she made her position good that first evening.

"I wish you'd all come and dine with me some time soon," she said, beaming around her. "Any time will suit me; you are the only people I know, so I have no engagements. Will you come, Mrs. Wolcott?"

Maud hesitated. "I should be very happy; I——"

Peele was much amused by the little woman's bravely talking to the one person in the room who was supposed to object to her. "I'll come



any time, with pleasure, Mrs. Feiling," he said.

"So'll I," added Lulu and Bijou, in a breath.

In a few minutes, an evening was found in the next week on which, by Peele's sacrificing a date when several present were engaged to him, the same party could meet at the house of their new plaything.

Bijou Mott walked home alone, very thoughtful. It was a beautiful night, but he saw nothing of it. He was thinking of Kathleen Feiling.

He could see that she was going to become the feminine clown of the society into which his introduction to Lulu Clarke had landed her. And he himself was the male clown of long standing. Meta would take her up, make her imitate people, turn her head, vulgarize her, and then, probably—drop her. This thought made Bijou angry. Kathleen was his discovery, and he didn't wish her to be spoiled.

She was absurd, wild, a little too free-and-easy in her manners, but she was simple, merry-hearted and sincere, and Bijou did not wish her to lose these qualities. He would go to see her to-morrow.

As he passed Barney's, he saw that great man sitting on a back-tilted chair in front of his house, smoking, as usual.

"G'd evening, Mr. Mott."

"Good evening, Barney. I say, Barney, it appears that you made a most hideous blunder in refusing to let Mrs. Feiling have a dinner at your place. I've been dining with her to-night at Mrs. Clarke's!"

"Mrs. Lucius, or Mrs. Tom Clarke's?" asked Barney, unmoved.

"Mrs. Tom's."

"Thought so. Good dinner?"

Bijou laughed. "Very good. Mrs. Feiling is giving a dinner a week from to-night at her house, Barney. Mr. Peele, the Wolcotts, the Foxes, a lot of your customers, will be there. I advise you to make it up with her; she's going to be asked everywhere."

"I'm agreeable, Mr. Mott. That's

all I objected to a few weeks ago—that she wasn't asked nowhere. Who'd 'a' dined with her, then? The McCalloms, the Frys, the Harold Smiths, an' all that crowd. I waited, an' now you see!"

"I see," returned Bijou, laughing. "You are a deep old thing, Barney."

"'Tain't deepness I need in my business; it's wideness. An' I've been in it thirty-one years now. Say, Mr. Mott—" He broke off, and refused to go on.

Bijou tried to make him tell what he had been going to say, but in vain. Then, he sauntered slowly homeward.

## XXII

It was Sunday evening, and, in the rarely-used parlor at John Birch's, the lamp was lighted, and stood on the little organ at which Pauline sat, singing.

The windows were open; the foliage hanging about them glimmered in the lamplight. The door into the corridor was open; the girl was singing for her mother, who lay ill up-stairs.

The black hymn-book, "Songs for the Sanctuary," was open on the carved music-rack, the lamp fell full upon the page; and with painstaking fingers the girl played her simple accompaniments.

Outside, on the rank grass of the lawn, cut to uneven shortness by a scythe, her uncle and aunt sat in rocking-chairs; from time to time, the sound of her voice reached them.

"'All hail, the power of Jesus' name!  
Let angels—'"

The girl's voice was small and thin and cold. She was no musician.

"'Bring forth the royal di-i-i-adem—'"

"Polly!" Aunt Jenny's voice was in the girl's ear, "that feller's a-comin'; d'ye want to see him?"

The sublime American confidence in the right and ability of every woman to manage her own love-affairs sounded in Aunt Jenny's anxious tones.

"Yes, I do. Send him in here."

Pauline's rigid little figure, in its badly-cut black gown, did not move as she spoke, and, when she had given the answer, she went on singing:

"And crown Him Lord of all!  
Crown Him, ye martyrs of our God,  
Who from His altar call;"

Something in the girl's voice fell like a stream of cold water on Van Buren Peele's ears as, led by Mrs. Birch, who left him at the kitchen door, he approached the parlor.

"Extol the Stem of Jesse's rod,  
And crown—Him—Lord—of—all."

Good evening, Mr. Peele."

Then, as the lamplight showed her his face, she clasped her hands suddenly. "Oh, what's the matter?" she cried. "You're sick."

"Oh, Pauline!" he exclaimed, throwing himself into a chair, and hiding his face with his hands, "don't be unkind to me, for God's sake! I can't stand it."

And Lulu Clarke, who, since her brief interview with the girl, had wasted many minutes trying to decide what her charm for Van could possibly be, would have understood, had she been there, the look that came into Pauline's face as, sitting down by Van and folding her hands, she gazed mutely at the top of his smooth head.

Uncle John and Aunt Jenny had, from motives of delicacy, withdrawn with their rocking-chairs to the rear of the house; everything was very still.

"My father's going away to Japan," went on the young man, at length, "and he—wants me to marry before he goes. He has arranged it all. This is the seventeenth of August; on the seventeenth of October I am to be married."

"To Evelyn Quincy; yes, I know. Mrs. Clarke told me."

"So Lulu's been meddling! I might have known she would," he went on, indifferently.

"She was nice to me. She said——"

"Well?" He looked up, struck by something in her voice.

The girl's pale cheeks were red, suffused with a slow, painful blush.

"What did she say?" he repeated, impatiently, his nerves on edge.

"She knew you were engaged to Miss Quincy; she said she wished I would marry you."

His first instinct was to wonder vaguely what Lulu had against Evelyn, and then, with a short laugh at himself, he asked: "Lulu said that? Why? What had you said to her?"

"Nothing—except that I wasn't going to marry you. She said—she thought I would do you good. Oh, Van!"

Van caught her hands, and held them tight. "So, you could have done me good, Pauline. You could have done—anything with me. Now, it is too late."

"Don't, Van! I couldn't do anything else. I think secret marriages are wicked, and I couldn't marry you if your father thought I'd hurt you. I'm not one of your kind of people, and I know it. If I had married you, and they had been unkind, it would have killed me."

"Unkind to you! Bah! I've been kind to you myself, haven't I? Pauline, tell me one thing, and I'll go. Do you care? Are you sorry?"

"Yes, I care, Van. I'm sorry. I—"

Her voice broke.

The kitchen clock struck seven.

Outside, in the still lane, two riders approached.

"I'll be hanged if I have the least idea where we are," the man exclaimed. "I never saw that house before, did you?"

"No. Do go and ask, or we'll be horribly late; I hate being late at Mrs. Wolcott's. There's the kitchen door; ride around, and I'll wait."

The man obeyed, but no one was to be seen, and no one heard his knock. Uncle John and Aunt Jenny had gone to look at the pigs.

"Hello, there!" Again the rider knocked, leaning down from his horse, and again there was no answer, though he could hear low voices in the house. At length, he rose, hung his bridle over the pump, and went in.

Meantime, the woman waited, im-

patient. He had been gone a very long time. There was a light in the window among the bushes, and surely voices came from within.

Over the rough lawn, the horse picked his way daintily, and, stooping, the girl looked in at the window.

### XXIII

"We must take the lane to the right; it leads to the road."

"Oh! You were gone a long time."

"Yes; no one was in the kitchen. At last, the farmer and his wife came from the barn-yard. I hope you didn't get cold, sitting still; there is a touch of Autumn in the air to-night."

"Oh, no, I wasn't cold."

Through the gathering dusk, Evelyn Quincy and Edwin Peele rode in silence, each turning over and over the thought, "How shall I tell? What shall I do?"

For Peele knew now that he had blundered in holding his son to the engagement; the look on Van's face, as he held the strange girl in his arms, had been enough. Peele, in honor, had stolen away, unseen; he needed time to decide on the next step, for one thing was certain—Evelyn must be told.

And the girl was thinking how she should manage to shield Van from his father's anger. She would have married him, she was fond of him, but it was always she who had been the stronger, and now she must help him.

From Evelyn's side of the room, Pauline's face had been visible, and, homely as had been the girl's surroundings, that one glance had been sufficient to make Evelyn understand that it was only in outward things that the girl Van Peele loved was inferior to her whom he had promised to marry.

Evelyn realized suddenly that Van had never loved her, and that she had never loved him as did the girl in the little house behind her.

She glanced quickly at Peele. He would be terribly hurt; his pride would be bitterly wounded. How she wished she could think of some way to spare him! Suddenly came the remembrance of her own words to him on the day of their last walk to the Point Light: "I would not hesitate an instant about breaking an engagement."

"Mr. Peele," she began, as they left the lane, and found themselves once more on familiar ground, "you asked me a few moments ago why I was so silent and sad. I—am going to tell you why."

Peele turned, quickly. "Yes? Well?"

"It is this. For a long time, I have been wondering about Van and me—whether we ought to marry; I mean, whether we care enough for each other."

Peele gave a great sigh of relief. "My dear child, if you can wonder about that, your answer is ready. You do *not* care enough."

She stared in astonishment. "And you seem glad!"

"I! My dearest Evy, there is no one on earth of whom I am so fond as I am of you. Therefore, if you do not love my son, I must thank God you have found it out in time."

It was so much easier than she had feared, and yet his words were a little stern. He had never before spoken of Van to her as "my son."

"I—the worst of it is, Mr. Peele, that I shall not have you for my father, after all. If I don't break my engagement——"

Peele laid his hand on hers. "You will have me always, for whatever you like, Evy," he said. "If I were not—a grandfather——"

There was a pause; then, he went on:

"And, whenever you marry, you must let me give you away, just as if I were really your father."

She laughed—a short, rather mirthless laugh. "What if I marry while you're away?"

"Away? Oh, I am not going away!"

"But—Japan?" she stammered; "why are you not going?"

He could not tell her that his journey, having been decided on merely as an excuse to hasten her marriage, was now an unnecessary sacrifice.

"I have come to the conclusion that I'd better stay at home," he answered, "and spend my declining days in the bosom of my family."

Evelyn shook her head. "How—queerly you speak! Maud——"

"Ah, yes—Maud and Rosebud. Rosebud will be glad to keep her grandpapa!"

"Mr. Peele, sometimes I have thought that you and I might have been real friends, if I had not been engaged to your son. Now that I have decided not to marry Van, will you have me for a friend?"

They had reached the gates of her mother's house.

"Yes, Evy, I will, and I thank you. Now, good night—or *au revoir*—I had forgotten."

She gave him her hand. "*Au revoir*—my friend."

## XXIV

Mrs. Wolcott's Sunday-evening dinners were rather formidable affairs; no one enjoyed them particularly, but every one went to them.

The old lady herself was gifted with a most bitter tongue, and she delighted to snub people; to make them feel small; to see them writhe in helpless anger.

Bijou Mott called her an engaging little thing, and, curiously enough, he was one of her especial pets, although he recently had been out of grace.

Maud, her daughter-in-law, the old lady frankly disliked; while Lulu Clarke, one of the very few people who disputed her sway, was a favorite. "You're a fool, Lulu," she used to say, in the curious, indistinct, mouth-ing way that, later, Kathleen Feiling mimicked so marvelously, "but I like you; funny, isn't it?"

And Lulu at once agreed with her,

offering as a reason the contrast between them.

"Meaning that you're young and lovely, and I old and ugly? Yet, I like you, Lulu."

The evening of her ride with Peele, Evelyn Quincy came in a little late, and Mrs. Wolcott, after a particularly rude remark to the girl, rang the bell.

"Tell that idiot that we are waiting for our dinner," she said to the footman. "Come along, all of you. De Pouence, you are to take me, not Miss Quincy."

De Pouence, who had been spending a few days at New Harbor, sprang to his hostess's side, delight in his eyes, at which she chuckled audibly.

It was a small dinner; besides the hostess, there were only Evelyn, Harry, Maud, Lulu Clarke, de Pouence, Peele, and Bijou Mott.

"I asked you and Bijou Mott," she said to de Pouence, "to remove the curse from a more or less 'family dinner.' Maud and I hate each other, and Ned is almost a relation. We have the same grandchild," she added, maliciously.

Her monologue, broken by audible and more or less abusive asides to the servants, lasted for the greater part of an hour. Other people, as the gods favored them, slipped in a remark now and then, often beginning several times before Mrs. Wolcott would listen; but the conversation was in her own hands.

"What's that, Bijou? Telling about your widow, are you? I'm talking about that Irishman. By the way, Maud, what's this I hear about your designing the furniture, and so on, for his yacht? Not paying you, is he? Now, don't lose your temper! I was asking only for information. Frightful creature he is; looks like a sea-horse himself—not that I ever saw one."

"Mrs. Wolcott!" Bijou leaned forward. "You must call on Mrs. Feiling—my widow; she's too good to be missed."

Maud laughed. "Mrs. Wolcott is

hardly likely to take up your pet, Bijou; she's not her kind."

"How do you know what my kind is, Maud? As it happens, I am very much interested in the girl—she looks very young—and mean to ask her to meet the bishop. I hear her imitations of one's best friends are unspeakably delicious." After a pause, she added, her diamonds glittering wickedly as she turned to Peele, "And I have another reason, Ned; surely, I am to be allowed a vote in the matter of Rosebud's grandmother!"

Peele laughed. "You are a wretch, to expose my youthful sentiments to the cold gaze of publicity."

"That's all very well, but a little bird——"

"Your little bird must be as big as a rooster to carry you all the news he does," remarked Bijou.

Evelyn put up her lorgnon, and looked thoughtfully at Peele, who, as he caught her gaze, frowned. The girl looked pale and worn, and the thought came to him suddenly that possibly, after all, she was unhappy about Van.

Mrs. Wolcott, too, noticed Evelyn's pallor, and, after dinner, drew her aside into a little alcove.

"My dear," she said, gently, "what's the matter?"

Evelyn hesitated. "I am worried, Mrs. Wolcott. I have decided to break my engagement with Van Buren Peele, and it is a rather difficult step to take."

The old woman bent over and kissed her. "I'm glad of that, Evelyn. He's not man enough for you. It's hard to believe he's Ned's son."

"I'm glad you think I'm right. But——" She broke off, as Maud began to sing. "May I come to see you to-morrow morning, and tell you all about it?" she added.

"You may, indeed, my dear. *Ach, Gott!* Maud is singing. How I loathe music!"

They went back nearer to the piano, and, while they were drinking coffee, Peele came and sat down by Evelyn. "Are you going to write him?"

"I have written him."

Maud finished her song, and, as she passed them, said: "Papa, Rosebud insisted on my bringing you this. I had to promise." She handed him a tiny china doll, no longer than his finger, and every one laughed.

"The way of the grandfather is hard," paraphrased Bijou, as he sat down at the piano, unasked.

Mrs. Wolcott watched Peele and Evelyn as they talked, he turning the doll over and over in his fingers; then, as Bijou began playing louder, the old lady rose and joined them.

"Evelyn's told me, Ned," she said, in an undertone, "and I'm delighted. He isn't nearly good enough for her."

Peele watched the girl's tired face for a moment, and then answered, "You are right, Mrs. Wolcott."

She rose. "Do you call that *music*?" she asked, glaring at the unconscious Bijou. "I call it an infernal racket. Why don't you marry her yourself, Ned?"

Then, she was gone, her velvet gown trailing over the floor.

Peele changed color. "Evelyn—never mind! She's an old witch. I——" He paused.

Grieg's cold-water strains still filled the room. "Evelyn—Bah! I am an old fool!"

He sprang to his feet, and, pushing the curly head of the doll through his button-hole, added, "The Grand Order of Imbecile Grandparents!"

Then, he followed his hostess, and carefully chose a cigarette from a silver box on the table. As he sat down, a servant came in with a note on a salver, and, offering it to Peele, waited to see whether there was an answer.

"No, no answer," he returned, at length. Then, he went back to Evelyn.

"Read that," he said, handing her the note.

DEAR FATHER:

I cannot marry Evelyn. I've been a coward and a brute, but I can't do that. I am going to be married in ten minutes to Miss Pauline Birch, niece of a farmer



in Barport County, at whose house I write this. I've written Evelyn. Of course, you'll hate this, and I'm all you choose to call me, but I can't help it. Lulu will tell you about Pauline.

VAN.

Lulu was telling a funny story, amid roars of laughter.

Evelyn handed the note back to Peele. "Thank God!" she said. Then, she went out on the veranda.

Peele was so surprised by the sudden turn of events that he stood still, staring at the paper, until Mrs. Wolcott took it out of his hand.

"A very nice note, Ned," she said. "He's more of a man than I thought, though I always knew that chin meant something. As for you, go and make love to Evelyn. Why, man, you've been in love with her for months!"

"Look here, Evelyn."

The girl turned. "Oh, it's you, Mr. Peele!"

"Yes. Tell me, did you see them this afternoon?"

"I did. I rode to the window, hear-

ing voices, and I saw them. I don't think you need object to her. I saw her face."

"Ah! Then, that was why——?"

She turned, at the strangeness of his voice, and put up her lorgnon. "Yes, that was why I said it—why I decided."

"You saw *her* face. I saw his. He loves her, Evelyn. I never saw him look at you as he did at her."

"No. And I never looked at him as she did. I ought never to have said yes to him, Mr. Peele. I didn't love him."

He drew a deep breath. "Thank God! I was afraid——"

There was a short pause.

Then, still staring out into the darkness, the girl said, hesitatingly, nervously: "You said—if you were younger—that you were an old fool—suppose I was shivering all over with relief at finding out in time that I didn't love Van—that I love—that my one ambition was to become a—a pendant to Rosebud's Grandpapa?"



## CHOPPING HIM OFF

A KINSIDE (*as a preface to his tale of woe*)—Misery, you know, loves company, and——

GRIMSHAW—So I have observed; but company is not so confoundedly fond of misery. Good day!



## HIS STATUS

"IS he popular?"

"Oh, he is as unpopular as a popular song becomes as soon as it gets to be popular."



WHEN we remember what we think of others, we are not anxious to know what others think of us.

## TO HER WHOM I SHALL WIN

I'M thy wooer,  
 My rose, my flower, my maid!  
 Dost hear?  
 The arm's gentle enfolding  
 Is not yet mine, nor even the divine  
 Hand touch; but I am near,  
 And thou canst not evade  
 My rapture of beholding.

I'm thy wooer,  
 My love, my maid, my flower!  
 Dost hear?  
 And 'tis no windy lover  
 To bruise thy bloom, seeking his heart's home  
 In haste. I'd never wear  
 A "Yes" won in an hour—  
 It must be lingered over.

I'm thy wooer,  
 My love, my flower, my rose!  
 Dost hear?  
 Sunlike I revel, holding  
 Thee still in bud, thy young heart's fragrant good  
 Leaf-hidden. Delay is dear,  
 Not dull, to one who knows  
 Thy sweet way of unfolding.

MILDRED I. MCNEAL.



## POOR HUMAN NATURE

WAGGLES—He couldn't remember why his wife tied a string around his finger, so he was afraid to go home, and stayed out all night.

JAGGLES—What was it he should have remembered?

WAGGLES—To come home early.



## HOW IT WORKS

CORA—Don't you think that being an actress is likely to make a woman notorious?

MERRITT—No; but being notorious is likely to make her an actress.

# THE BOWER OF CUPID

By Frank Dempster Sherman

*WHO*SO enters at this portal  
Shall find Love the one immortal.

Green the grave that hides the grotto  
Over which is hung this motto;

Broidered paths of bloom and berry  
Lead unto the monarch merry;

Birds above on leafy branches  
Loosen lyric avalanches;

Bees go singing in the sunny,  
Blossom-built haunts of honey;

Flutes of brooks and lutes of grasses  
Waken with each wind that passes;

All is fragrance, song and joy,  
Made for one immortal boy!

Many seek this grotto hidden;  
Welcome all, and none forbidden.

Soft the air and clear as amber;  
Round the gate red roses clamber;

Day long, mirth and music fill it;  
Night sends moon and star to thrill it.

Voices, visions, dreams of rapture,  
There await, the heart to capture;

Full it is of faultless faces—  
All the Muses and the Graces;

Poem, picture, flower and fancy—  
Every form of necromancy;

Naught to worry or annoy,  
Save the one immortal boy!

In this grotto lies the golden  
Guest-book, full of legends olden,

## THE SMART SET

Writ by lovers on its pages  
Since the daybreak of the ages;

Paris, Helen, Petrarch, Laura,  
Meleager, Heliodora,

All the glorious *Amante*  
Sung of old by Tuscan Dante;

Names that shine in song and story  
Crowd this volume with their glory—

Tokens left by all the lovers  
In the world, between the covers;

Yet the record cannot cloy  
Love, the one immortal boy.

Eve in Eden, fresh and pearly,  
Found on Earth this grotto early;

So, it came forever after  
To be haunted by her laughter.

What a countless throng have tasted  
Love therein ere life was wasted!

Blind they call the boy, in kindness,  
Yet is theirs the only blindness.

He is sure of ear and vision,  
Hearts he matches with precision;

That is Cupid's only duty  
In this bower of bliss and beauty—

That the end of all employ  
Is for one immortal boy!



## HE WANTED TO KNOW

LITTLE CLARENCE—Pa!

MR. CALLIPERS—Well, my son?

LITTLE CLARENCE—Pa, is a double eagle one that is married, or a pair of 'em that are twins?



THE unpopularity of virtue is due to the virtuous.

# A CURE OF SOULS

By Owen Oliver

MISS AGNES leaned back among the cushions, and closed her eyes wearily, as the doctor rose to go.

"I don't think I shall ever get well," she said, in a soft, tired voice.

"Nonsense!" said Dr. Strong, vigorously. He was a tall, broad man with big features, and everything that he did was vigorous. "There's nothing the matter with you, and you want to think there is."

"You mean that there's something the matter with me, and you want me to think there isn't. What is it, doctor?"

"Prostration after influenza," he pronounced, gruffly.

She passed a tiny, scented handkerchief over her forehead. It was a puzzle whether her face, her hand, or her handkerchief was the whitest.

"What do you mean by prostration?" she asked, languidly.

"A complaint that doctors cure with evil-tasting tonics."

"It's useless to give me medicine," she asserted, in the same uninterested tone.

"That's *my* business. I shall give you medicines till I have exhausted the whole pharmacopœia; they'll all be nasty," he added, grimly.

"And then?"

He shrugged his great shoulders. "Then? Oh! I shall go through the pharmacopœia again. Come, come!"—he brought his hand down heavily on his knee—"you've got to be cured, so what's the use of making a fuss about it?"

"You cannot minister to a mind diseased."

"Mind! Don't talk to me about what you're pleased to call minds. I've trouble enough with bodies." He got up and paced the room. "For two pins," he threatened, "I—I'd give up the case."

Miss Agnes's mouth quivered a little, and her pale-blue eyes grew moist. The doctor put his hand suddenly on her shoulder. He had a very soft touch for such a huge man.

"Tell me about it, my dear," he begged. "What is it?"

She sobbed, faintly. "I saw the name in a book the other day. I did not know before what to call it. You will laugh at me."

He drew a chair beside her, and sat down. "God forbid," he said, gravely, "that I should laugh at you. What was it called—in your book?"

She turned her head away. "Soul-sickness," she whispered.

He stroked the poor, wasted hand that hung over the arm of the couch. "The soul," he said, slowly, "has no right to be sick. It has its work to do; the work that God has given it."

"God"—her voice trembled—"has not given me my work."

He laughed a soft, comforting laugh. "'They also serve who only stand and wait,'" he said. "Some love their work so much that it seems just part of themselves. They do it, and never think that it is work."

"You mean—just little things."

He stroked her hand again. "You call it little things. I don't. Do you know how I reckon up my assets, when I start on my rounds to heal—the work that God has given me?" She shook her head. "First, I put down my



medicines, such as they are; then, my doctor craft, such as it is; then, the nurse's work—which is more than mine. These are the things that everybody sees; that get the credit for the case. But there is a greater healer than all these."

"You mean——?"

"I mean kindness, my dear; the kindness of all the people in our little world—your world and mine; and, among all the kind people who help me to heal, I put you first!"

The tears came suddenly to the pale eyes, and one rolled down each white cheek. He took her handkerchief, and wiped the tears slowly away, before he continued:

"I don't mean the charitable societies, and the alms. I mean the cheering words, the kind smiles, the sympathy—the letting them see that somebody *cares*." He got up and paced the room again. "The sick of soul want kindness, most of all. Everybody wants it, sometimes—even a cross-grained old doctor going his rounds. You help me by helping the patients. You help the patients by helping me. That is your work."

Miss Agnes gripped the arm of the couch, and raised herself. Her mouth moved, tremulously, and there was a look almost of terror in her eyes.

"Help me!" she cried; "help me! I— Don't look at me, doctor! Don't look at me! I want—to be loved!"

He drew a deep breath, and said nothing for a long time.

"You mean—I won't affect to misunderstand—you wish for—a lover?"

The pale face flushed, hotly.

"There isn't any one," she protested, excitedly. "I—I don't want any one to make love to me—I don't mind being an old maid, only, it seems as if my life was incomplete. If I could know that somebody— It is natural for a woman— What must you think of me?"

"My opinion of you is too fixed to be greatly altered," he said, gravely. "So far as I can alter it, it is—exalted."

She shook her head, feebly. "I am

ashamed of such thoughts," she told him, in a low voice.

"They are womanly dreams. You need not be ashamed of them. We—we all have our dreams. I have mine—I allow myself one sigh a year, as an indispensable luxury."

"You have sighed three times this afternoon," she reminded him, gently.

"Sighs for other people don't count against me."

"They count," she said, "on the other side of the account—the credit side."

"I meant a selfish sigh, a sigh for the things that I wished for myself—I was to be a famous specialist; I was to make a fortune; I was to have little children growing up at my knee. Well, well! here I am, getting on to fifty; growing a little bald; temper not improving; an unwealthy country-practitioner; and alone! Ah, there's my annual sigh! I shall permit myself no more soul-sickness for a year."

"It is different with a man," she pleaded. "He can aim at so many things."

"More failure is possible to him, certainly," he said, grimly. "However, we are wandering from your case."

"I don't want to talk any more about my folly." She flushed, faintly. "I—really, there is nothing more to tell."

"Then, it only remains to prescribe. You have made me physician in ordinary to your mind, you know. Suppose there *were* somebody? I presume you have set up a standard for him in your mind?"

"Yes," she confessed.

"I thought so! *He* would fall far short of your ideal. Men do not run good!"

"Some do."

He shook his head. "You would soon find out, if you married him!"

"I should not want to marry him. I am nearly forty, you see, doctor; and I—I have my ways."

"Exactly. *He* would have his ways, too. At forty, more or less, ways do not meet easily. They go better apart."

"I fear so," she sighed. "I should prefer not to try—now."

"Yet, you would like him to love you?"

"I don't know." She hesitated.

"Come, come! I must have the symptoms clearly. Yes, or no?"

"Yes," she said, softly; "if it is not selfish to wish it. Perhaps, it would not be good for him."

"It is good for any man—the liberal education of loving a good woman. I have missed the finishing school. Perhaps, that is why I am no better than I am."

"You have loved the sick and the poor, and the little children," she said, softly. "Your education has been *that*."

"Have you not loved them?"

"A woman is different. Loving is not enough for her. She wants *love*. A flower is a poor, stunted thing without the sunshine."

They were silent for a long time; and the doctor mortgaged another year's sigh. Then, she spoke again.

"You have been so very, *very* kind. I don't know how to thank you. It will help me to remember——"

"You must begin by forgetting."

"I can't." She twisted the handkerchief, restlessly, in her fingers. "Oh, I can't!"

"Then, love an imaginary—him," he suggested.

She laughed a quick, feeble laugh. "Oh, you don't understand! I have been imagining him all my life. I shall go on imagining him until—" Her voice choked.

"Umph!" He paced the room with his hands beneath his coat-tails, and watched her under his thick eyebrows as she sank into listlessness again. How very thin she was, and pale! It was strange that no lover had ever come to her. She was a sweet woman, a little colorless, perhaps, but still—She had been pretty, too. Even now, with a little pink in her cheeks— Unless something aroused her the color would never come again—never!

"Forget what I have said, doctor," she begged, presently. "I was over-

wrought. It is, of course, a morbid fancy—a sick woman's fancy."

"And, when the sick woman is well, it will go?"

"No," she whispered, almost inaudibly; "it will never go."

"Umph!" he said again. "Then, you will never be quite cured, unless—" He walked slowly to the window, and looked out for a few seconds; then walked back with the vigor of decision. "A doctor has strange confidences, sometimes," he remarked. "If he could divulge them—suppose I know that there *is* some one. I can't tell you about him, but"—she tried to sit up, but he held her back, gently—"he certainly has a great regard for you."

"You don't think—" her voice was more frightened than eager—"you don't think he will say anything to me? Oh, I hope not!"

"No-o. I don't think he will say anything. He is a sensible man, and recognizes that you are both a little—a little settled in habits, he will say. It would not be for the happiness of either of you."

She smoothed out her apron, and smiled. "I won't ask who he is——"

"I couldn't tell you, if you did."

"Of course not; but, is he—I hope he is not young. Boys are so foolish, you know." She smiled, tenderly. All the boys brought their troubles to Miss Agnes.

"He is older than you are," he reassured her.

"And—and—?" She stopped.

"Not at all good-looking, if that is what you mean. Quite an ordinary man, and—I sha'n't tell you another word about him." He took up his hat. "Now, you must get well!"

"Yes, yes! Does he know I am ill?"

"He—he is very anxious about you." The doctor saw her eyes wander to the side-table, laden with fruit and flowers, the offerings of many friends. "You needn't look at your presents." She sighed, disappointedly. "He is not so unkind to you, or himself, as to betray his feelings."

"I wonder—" she began, dreamily; but she did not finish.

Dr. Strong closed the door, softly, and went away. When he was outside the house, he wiped his forehead slowly, with a colored silk handkerchief.

"I am a quack," he muttered; "a quack! There never was a quack yet who wasn't found out—eh, James? What? No, I can't say that she is better, but—how often have I told you not to keep the horse standing in the sun?"

The following day, Miss Agnes was very still and quiet; but there was a little more life in her face. The next day, she was distinctly better; and the next, and the next. In a week, she was able to sit up to tea. The doctor had tea with her. She did not ask him any questions, except with her eyes; and, then, he looked the other way.

The morning after, she laughed twice during his visit. When he was going, she called him.

"Doctor!" He stopped with his hand on the door-handle. "Tell me a little more—just a little!"

"Umph!" Dr. Strong frowned, severely. "Just like a woman! I told you that he spoke to me in confidence."

"He actually spoke to you, then?"

"There are more ways than one of speaking. There's only one way of holding one's tongue. It's no use looking at me as if I were ill-using you. You can call me a brute, if you like."

"I prefer to call you kind." The smile that she gave him was not a sick woman's.

"Umph! You think you're going to coax me into telling you? You're not." He opened the door. "He—he keeps on asking after you," he said. Then, he went.

On the two following visits, Miss Agnes made no inquiry about her unknown lover. On Saturday, the doctor decided that she might go for a drive. He called for her in the afternoon, in a carriage loaded with pillows, cushions and rugs, and drove himself.

She was unusually animated, and chatted pleasantly about people, music and books. She had always been an interesting talker in a rather timid way. She seemed to have found the touch of brightness that he had thought wanting.

"How is the soul-sickness?" he asked, abruptly. They were driving through Deep Vale, where the trees overhang.

She turned a little away from him. "You give it very little medicine."

"Professional etiquette," he began. "No, hang professional etiquette! It isn't that. There's his side of the question. I don't understand that you're in love with him!"

"I don't know who he is."

"Are you in love with anybody?" he asked, sharply.

"Oh, doctor!" There was a pale pink in her cheeks now, and it became pinker. "How can you ask such a thing!"

"You haven't answered."

"Of course, I'm not."

"Then," he said, emphatically, "I've no right to give him away; and I'm not going to."

"Am I *never* to know?" she asked, wistfully.

"If you can ever say to me, 'Doctor, I love so and so——'"

"I shall *never* say that!"

"Then, I shall never tell you. Don't pout like a child."

She laughed, almost girlishly. "I know I am old," she said; "but I feel young to-day."

"You look young. Well, well! we are nearly home. It has been a pleasant time."

"A pleasant time," she echoed. "Probably, that is why I feel so childish."

She smiled, contentedly, as she lay back among the pillows; and the doctor looked at her out of the corners of his eyes.

"She's a pretty woman," he thought, "a very pretty woman—and wasting her love on a shadow. I'm a confounded fool!"

A week later, she asked the doctor

if she might go out walking. She was "as well as well could be," she declared, and wanted "to reckon among his assets again."

"Very well," he assented; "you are off the sick-list."

"It is you," she vowed, "who have cured me."

"Soul-sickness and all?"

She drew a deep breath. "You will think so, when I tell you that I do not intend to ask you about—your confidence—any more."

His big fingers played with a book on the table.

"You—don't—want—to—know—about—him?" he said, jerkily. "May I ask why?"

"You have every right to ask. It is because I do not—do not love him, whoever he may be. You will not tell him that, of course. It will always help me to know that some one has cared for me. Perhaps, he will not be any worse for doing so."

"I am sure," said the doctor, "he is better for it; much better. Not that he is really good, but—he might be worse."

"I shall always think of him as a good man. If I knew him——"

"Suppose I advised him to come and tell you?"

"No," she cried, agitatedly; "no! it is better as it is."

The doctor took his hat, and bowed.

"Better as it is," he echoed.

"You think it is wiser?" she pleaded.

"Yes, it is wiser," he agreed; "and, perhaps, wisdom is better than love."

They looked at each other for a moment. Then, she touched his sleeve, gently.

"You are such a dear friend," she said, softly. "I don't want you to think that I am incapable of love. It is only to save him pain. I have—an ideal. He couldn't be that—he couldn't. If you think he wants my friendship, I will give him all the affection that I can, as a friend. You may tell him that, only—he must understand that I cannot love him."

The doctor bowed again. "I am sorry," he said; "very sorry."

"But why——?"

He put down his hat, suddenly. "I am the man," he said.

"You!" she cried; "you!"

"I," he declared, gravely. "Don't try to comfort me now, my dear. I can't bear it. He was a fiction at first; a quack remedy. It serves me right for being a quack—but, I grew to love you so dearly! Now, we'll shake hands—and forget."

He held out his big hand, and she took it, softly, in both of hers. Her lips were trembling and her eyes were wet and smiling; and her voice was like a song of triumph, sung softly.

"It is *you*, who are my ideal," she told him. "I—I love you!"



## BOTH KINDS

THE CALLOW YOUTH—A poor man is a fool to marry.  
THE GRIZZLED BACHELOR—So is a rich one.



## PLEASANT NEWS

"I AM the last of the Braggingtons!"  
"Glad to hear it."

## A BALLAD OF HEARTS

IT was a maiden who spake to Time,  
 "Canst thou heal this heart of me?  
 It is broken twice and broken thrice,  
 As a trifling toy might be;  
 And the heart we break for a false love's sake  
 Is a thing men mock to see."

'Twas Time who listened, and Time who laughed,  
 "Why, a little thing is this;  
 The touch of my hand can make it whole  
 And clean of the tear and kiss;  
 With nor spot nor stain shall it be again,  
 With never a joy to miss."

It was a woman who spake to Time,  
 "I bring neither whole nor part,  
 But a little handful of burned-out ash,  
 That once was my living heart.  
 Canst thou give me back this thing I lack,  
 With touch of thy subtle art?"

'Twas Time who listened, and Time who frowned,  
 "I toil for the living's sake;  
 I blurr the kiss as I ease the smart,  
 Where the live wounds throb and ache;  
 But they seek a God, who, from stone and sod,  
 Would bid the red dust wake."

It was the woman who went her way,  
 Down the barren road she came;  
 One who had never a gift to give,  
 And never a gift to claim,  
*And cold on her breast the ashes pressed,  
 With the awful smart of the flame.*

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



## A PLAIN CASE

JACK—Is that Miss Bonds? Well, I must say that I fail to see her beauty.  
 ARTHUR—Great Scott! You surely are dull at figures!



CLARENCE—What's a practical joke, pa?  
 MR. CALLIPERS—The kind that sells.



# LET FURNISHED

By John Oxenham

OVER and above that good feeling toward the ruler of the realm which is only his right and proper due, there are without doubt, at the present moment, numberless loyal lieges who feel that they have had enough Coronation to satisfy them for the terms of their natural lives, and—if they are thoughtful and considerate—for the lives of their descendants to the *n*th generation.

Like the courtiers of old, they cry from full hearts, "O King, live for ever!" And, if they do not mean quite all that, it is safe to say that they consider one Coronation ample for several ordinary lifetimes.

The loyal lieges had, I find, undergone tribulation at the hands of the crowds and the police. They had caught chills and fevers from over-exposure to the elements and their fellows. Benches had broken down under them, and clouds above them. Some of them had even let their houses furnished by the week and month, and had lived to regret it.

By the time you have finished this story, if you are sensible enough to do so, you will probably say that I, personally, had not much to grumble at. You will say it might have been worse. Well, so might most things, when you come to think of it; and, meanwhile, there is a certain consolation in a growl.

Willstead is one of the prettiest suburbs of London, and the house-agents there are a peculiarly gifted class, endowed with enterprising minds—relatives in America, probably—and a flow of persuasive eloquence to which Niagara is a trickle. Their

name also is Legion, after the Scriptural acceptation and application of the term.

We have a very pleasant little house there, nicely situated half-way up the hill, five minutes from the station and one minute from the country, though the country is, I regret to say, suffering from a wild epidemic of jerry-builder, from which nothing less than an earthquake will ever redeem it.

I had never realized how many house-agents a place like Willstead could support in affluence till their circulars began flowing in, early in April, suggesting the letting of our house furnished for the months of June and July, and setting forth the advantages to be derived therefrom in a way to which it was quite impossible to close one's eyes.

Naturally, one would have liked the children to see the Coronation, but since, by some oversight on the part of the authorities, seats sufficient for the family had not been allotted to us in Westminster Abbey, and as, in after years, it would not be pleasant to have A and B saying to C and D, "Huh! you didn't see the Coronation!" it became a question of freezing, or soaking, or sweltering—a pretty even chance either way—on a stand along the route, or of eschewing the whole matter, and finding greater enjoyment elsewhere.

Elsewhere certainly seemed to offer many chances of greater enjoyment, and Legion fought for the opportunity of smoothing the way.

"Three reception, six bed, one dressing-room, conservatory?" quoth he, washing his hands of doubts and difficulties. "Five guineas a week

for June and July, plate and linen, half a guinea extra. My charges five per cent., one guinea the agreement, three guineas inventory. No difficulty whatever, my dear sir. You may consider it done. Lady just in, wanting—" Then, he tapped his pencil up and down between his teeth, looked at me doubtfully, and said, with an air of extreme solicitude for my interests, "No, I don't think I would advise you to take her. She is from Central America, daughter of the President of Guateras; money all right, but—well, she has six children, mostly boys, and four servants, and——"

"Thanks," I said, hastily, "something a bit more—a bit less—you understand, if you can manage it."

"Yes," he ruminated; "I think she'd better have the school in Green Lane. It's closed on account of measles, and they'll be glad to let it, and it's used to being kicked about. I'll send you up the right party within a day or two."

"Sure?"

"Oh, certain! It's only a question of picking out the best for you. I would like the matter to turn out quite satisfactorily."

So, we laid our plans, and set our house in order, locked into a spare attic all our best books and knickknacks, brought up the supply of plate—such as it was—and linen to its full fighting strength, paralyzed my wife's sisters, who had a house on the Clyde, by accepting their cordial invitation for the youngsters to spend June and July with them, and got down our old guide-books of the Italian lakes and Switzerland, and reveled in the anticipation of a second honeymoon in those earthly paradises, free from cares, and children, and house, and everything.

In due time appeared a tall gentleman, with a gray mustache, accompanied by an obsequious Legionary, to inspect the house.

The tall gentleman was Colonel Sawler, of Boston, U. S., and the young lady was his daughter, Mamie.

Miss Mamie was very nicely dressed,

and the colonel was very pleasant and humorously appreciative of the points of the house. With a quiet twinkle of the eye, he even stated that he had read some of my books, and had enjoyed them extensively. I considered him a capital fellow, and Legionary regarded me with new interest.

"And you're not hankering after seeing the Cor'nation yourself?" asked the colonel. "See plenty of that kind of thing, maybe?"

I intimated that, after due consideration, and even though we might never have the chance of seeing another Coronation, we had decided that Switzerland would suit us just as well for this Summer.

"We're calculating to take a run over there ourselves, when we've got all we want out of London," he said; and, in the light of after events, I have been able to appreciate his words at their full face value.

"Well, Mamie," he asked, when they had got around and seen everything we wished to show them, "will it do?"

"I think it'll do vurry well," said Mamie.

"Might I ask what family you have?" I asked, remembering the Guateras lady.

"That's all," he said, nodding humorously at his daughter, "and quite enough, too, sometimes. Then, there's her maw and her Aunt Julie. And, if this gentleman will draw up the papers at his office, I'll leave him a cheque now for the whole amount. I reckon C. O. D. is the best reference a man can give or take. We'll come in on the first of June, if that's quite convenient to you. That's a week from to-day. How'll that suit?"

That suited us admirably, and Legion's minion wriggled rapturously and escorted them down the garden, bubbling eulogistic commonplaces on the situation of the house, the healthiness of Willstead, its proximity to town, good service of trains, and so on. And we set to and packed the youngsters' boxes, and congratulated our-

selves on having done an exceedingly good stroke of business.

Colonel Sawler's cheque was duly honored, Legion's demands duly satisfied, the children despatched northward with their nurse, and my wife and I duly landed in paradise.

We had a most delightful time, and pitied overcrowded London with all our hearts. We visited all the places of which we had carried delightful memories with us since the year one. We satisfied our eyes and hearts with good things, and renewed our youth like the eagles.

But, toward the middle of July, the mother-bird grew weary of so long a flight, and even of pleasures so great, or, at all events, grew hungry for a sight of the distant fledglings, and we decided that ten days in Scotland—her native heath—would be the best possible capstone to the honeymoon. So, we turned our faces homeward, and, as I had a couple of days' business in London, I saw my wife into the Scotch express at Euston, after promising her to run out to Willstead, before I followed her north, to make sure that Colonel Sawler and the house were still there.

I had sent a telegram in the afternoon to my friend Gordon, whose house is just across the road from my own, saying that I would favor him with a visit for the night. But, during the day, I ran across Sampson, who had my next book in hand, and he insisted on my dining with him at his club. It was late, therefore, when I got to Gordon's house, and, after greetings and inquiries, Mrs. Gordon turned on me with snaps in her bright eyes, and asked:

"Who on earth is it you've let your house to?"

"It's an American gentleman, Colonel Sawler, of Boston."

"And however many of him are there?"

"How many of him? Only himself and his wife and daughter, and, I think he said, an aunt."

At which, they both laughed outright, and left me much puzzled.

"Anything wrong?" I asked, anxiously. "The house looked all right, as far as I could see."

"Oh, the house is all right, or we'd have let you know; but——"

"But——?"

"Well, wait till morning, and watch the colonel come out."

"Why, what's wrong with him? Doesn't get drunk first thing, and make an exhibition of himself, I hope."

"Oh, dear, no! You just wait and see. He puzzles us—that's all."

And not another word could I get from them on that subject, and I spent my waking moments in wondering what my tenant had been up to to exercise their minds to such an extent.

We were just finishing breakfast, next morning, when Mrs. Gordon jumped up with, "Now, then, here's the colonel. He's beginning;" and I joined her, hastily, at the window.

Three gentlemen were just turning out of my gate, all immaculately dressed in well-fitting frock-coats and the shiniest of hats, and all smoking big cigars. I looked them over, carefully.

"None of those is Colonel Sawler," I said; at which, Mrs. Gordon laughed, anticipatorily.

"Just you wait," she said.

Presently, two more came out and went down the road toward the station, and she looked at me with her eyes full of laughter.

Almost immediately, three more followed them, and Mrs. Gordon watched my face eagerly, and could hardly restrain herself at what she saw in it.

"No colonel yet?" she asked.

"No colonel yet."

The gate clicked again, and two more came out. They were all elderly men, and all well-dressed. They were all smoking large cigars, and all evidently on the best possible terms with themselves and the world in general.

"Well, I'm—hanged!" I gasped. "How many more of them are there?"

"Oh, we're not nearly through yet," wept Mrs. Gordon, sinking into a

chair, and mopping her eyes at sight of my face.

Three more came out and followed the rest.

"Good heavens!" I gasped. "Where on earth do they all come from?"

"Out—out of your house," choked Mrs. Gordon.

"But it can't hold them all!" I reasoned.

"But it does; look!"

Two more, laughing and joking like the rest!

"Why, there must be a score of them, at least," I said, in amazement.

"Fifteen," said Mrs. Gordon. "And the stout gentleman has not gone yet. Oh, it's too funny! I've watched them every morning, and wondered which was Colonel Sawler. Was he there?"

"No, he wasn't—unless he's split himself up into fragments. I must go across at once, and see what it all means."

"Oh, I wish I could go, too," sobbed Mrs. Gordon.

"I think I'd better go first," I said, grimly. "I may have a word or two to say to the colonel, if he's there." And I put on my hat, walked across the road, and rang my own doorbell.

A severely prim, thin-faced lady of middle age answered it.

"Colonel Sawler in?" I asked.

"He is not here just now," she answered. "Will you come in?" And I followed her into the drawing-room, which looked very much as usual, save that it contained more chairs than it was accustomed to.

"There's only one small bedroom," said the thin-faced lady, with a pinching of the brows, "and it's quite a chance that there is even that."

"Oh!" I said, and stared blankly at her, not having the slightest idea what she meant.

"Yes; we've been full right up to yes'day. But Mr. Robbins left yes'day morning, and he said I could use his room, if I wanted. He's gone on to France and It'ly. It'll be

twenty-five dollars for the week. He was paying fifty, same as the rest; but, of course, the best time is over."

"I—I think I'd like to see the room, if you wouldn't mind," I gasped, an inkling of the state of matters beginning to dawn upon me.

"Cert'nly!" And she led the way up the stairs to the servants' bedroom, though I had difficulty in recognizing it as such.

It was originally a good-sized room, under the roof which sloped down at the sides, and minimized its proportions somewhat. It was transformed now, by means of thin partitions of unpainted wood, into three small cubicles, each containing a bedstead, chair, bamboo table, and spindle-legged iron washstand.

The mounting of the staircase had given me time to recover my wits somewhat. An inordinate curiosity possessed me to discover what further transformations the house had undergone.

"H'm!" I said. "Rather close quarters, isn't it?"

"They're all same size," she said, frostily, "except Judge Bacon's, and he pays a hundred a week. He's a stout man. So's she."

We were drifting down the stairs again, and, to emphasize her words, she opened the door of the spare room. To my amazement, I saw that it also was divided into two by means of the board partitions. I examined these now with an interested eye for structural damages, but found no signs of any. The planks of the partition all dovetailed into one another, and were fitted to the wall against a flat, upright board, and I could not see a nail anywhere.

"And how many have you in the house at present?" I asked.

"We sit down sixteen to breakfast, as a rule," she said, "but some stop in town for dinner. It makes no difference in the tariff"—this for my benefit—"the dinner's there. If you don't choose to come and eat it, it's your own lookout."

"Quite so," I said. "And when do

you expect Colonel Sawler to be here?"

"He may be to-night. We're never sure. He's got his other places to attend to, as well as this."

"Of course. How many places is he running, did you say?"

"I didn't say. But he's got ten, altogether."

"Really! They must keep him busy."

"He's a man of business, and things run smooth with him. Do you want to take the room?"

"Well, I'd like very much to see the colonel. I'll wait and see if he comes, and, if he doesn't, I'll stop the night, and pay you the right proportion."

"Very well. Mr. Robbins has paid for it, anyway, so I don't see's the colonel can object. Dinner's at eight. Smoking-room's in the conservatory. You'll find the judge there."

I went to the conservatory, and found it well furnished with cane chairs, and spittoons, and bamboo tables covered with American papers, and a very stout, gray-haired gentleman sitting in a chair which had undoubtedly been built with an eye to his size and weight. It emitted shrill squeaks, and seemed on the point of collapse whenever he moved a finger, and, as he was rarely still for more than a second, its agonized protest was continuous and somewhat irritating to the nerves.

The judge himself was built on the most ample favored-nation scale, and had evidently done his best to live up to it. He showed three distinct chins, and concealed several more beneath his collar; his shape was that of a feather bed, and his fingers were like sausages. He greeted me with a nod which set his chair screaming in mortal agony, and asked, wheezily:

"Bit late, aren't you?"

"How's that?" I asked.

"Show's over."

"Oh, I've been in Italy, instead."

"Meet Robbins? He's gone to Italy."

"I did not meet him. We must have passed each other on the road."

"You're not Amurrican?" he said, after a prolonged stare at me.

"I have not that honor," I said, blandly, and he regarded me doubtfully out of his fat little eyes, and then laughed a wheezy little laugh, in which his chair took part.

"'Murrican house, this," he said, presently.

"So I perceive. The atmosphere must remind you of home."

He shook his head, gently. "England's 'way behind Amurrica, atmosphere and all."

"Except in the matter of Coronations," I ventured.

"No use for 'em," he gurgled. "Business men. Don't run to flummery."

I had half an idea of consulting the judge, who presumably knew something of law, as to the moral right of a man to take another man's house for himself and his family of three, and then to turn it into a private hotel for the accommodation of sixteen or more; but, looking at him, I doubted if he would give me an entirely unbiased opinion. There was no harm, however, in feeling one's way gently.

"You know Colonel Sawler?" I asked.

"Know Sawler? I guess so. Everybody knows Sawler. Smart man." And then he breathed hard with exertion most unusual, and regarded me, humorously.

"Had a deal with him?" he wheezed, presently.

"I have had dealings with him."

He looked lazily at me again for a time, and then said, "Ah!" very expressively, presently adding, "smart man, Sawler!" Just then, two cabs drove up to the front gate, and stood waiting.

The thin-faced lady came to the door of the conservatory, and said, "Judge, your cabs;" and the big man erected himself by a series of strenuous heaves which threatened the cane chair with extinction, and waddled after her, while I went to the front windows to see how he divided himself between the two cabs.



Then, I heard through the open door of the dining-room:

"Now, Tattie, air you coming?"

"I'm coming, judge. Don't you fuss me, or I'll be in a state all day." And, from the window, I saw the judge and his lady roll down the path, and hoist themselves slowly, with the assistance of the two cabmen, into their respective cabs, which swayed precariously on their springs. When they had finally attained a level keel, they rolled heavily away.

I strolled through the house, nominally in search of the thin-faced lady, but really to discover what more I could of the colonel's arrangements.

Opening the door of the breakfast-room at the back, I found it partitioned inside like the up-stairs rooms, and transformed into bedrooms. The dining-room contained a great table, or series of tables, from which the breakfast had not yet been cleared, and, while I stood gaping and wondering if this were indeed my modest residence, a burly black woman, with a colored handkerchief tied over her wool, came in and began piling the dishes together.

"Mawnin', sah!" she grinned, pleasantly, at me. "Yo' done had yo' breakfus'?"

"I was too late for it," I said.

"Sho, now!" in a tone of immense commiseration. "I'll git yo' some. Thar's hominy and buckwheats and fried chick'n——"

"Oh, please don't trouble."

"No trouble, sah. I c'n mek you'n om'let in half a wink," she suggested, insinuatingly.

"It's very kind of you, but I won't trouble you, thanks. Would you tell Mrs.—Miss——"

"Miss Peskutt."

"Tell her I'll go for a stroll, but I'll look in again shortly to see if Colonel Sawler has come in."

"I'll tell her, sah. Law's me, thar's the wagin!" And she bustled off to the kitchen.

As I went down the front path, I saw a van discharging a great load

of eatables, specially adapted, I presumed, to the American taste.

I strolled over to the house opposite, where Mrs. Gordon was awaiting me with eyes of vast anticipation.

I told her all I had seen and learned, and she dropped on the sofa, and wept again with the enjoyment of it.

"Oh, it's too screamingly funny!" she gasped. "Jack waited till the very last minute, hoping you'd come over. He'd have waited all day, I think, he was so anxious to hear about it; but he had an appointment."

"Oh, it's very funny," I granted, "but it's not half as funny for me as it is for Colonel Sawler. Why, the man's making a fortune. Just think, he's got fifteen men there paying ten pounds a week, and the judge paying twenty pounds—that's one hundred and seventy pounds—that's six hundred and eighty pounds for the month, one thousand three hundred and sixty pounds for the two months, and he's running nine more houses on the same lines! And he paid me forty-four guineas!"

"Well, isn't it awfully American?" laughed Mrs. Gordon, wiping her eyes.

"Yes, it is," I said, with feeling; "it's awfully, damnably American, if you'll permit me the word."

"I'll permit you," she choked, going off again at thought of it all. "Can you do anything?"

"I doubt it, unless he does some damage; and I haven't yet been able to discover any. But I'd like to give him a bit of my mind, and I'm going to wait there till I get the chance."

"I do wish I could be present," she sighed.

"It'll probably be more entertaining than elevating. I shall tell the colonel just what I think of him."

"I *should* like to be there," said she.

I called in several times during the day, but the colonel had not turned up. When Gordon came home, I discussed the whole matter with him, and he nearly had a fit over it.

"I don't believe you can do a thing," he said, when he came to himself. "There was nothing in your agreement, I suppose, to prevent his in-

viting a friend or two to stop with him?"

"I don't suppose there was, but—sixteen!"

"It's only a matter of degree, my boy, and he's blown his bubble as big as he could. You can try to bluff him, of course, but——"

Our heads wagged dolefully, mine with knowledge—for I have lived in America—and Gordon's with sympathy.

"About as good as trying to bluff the Atlantic, I know," he said. "I'm afraid all you can do is to tell him what you think of him. It'll relieve your feelings, anyway."

I went in to my own house to dinner, and found only ten of Colonel Sawler's guests there, including Judge Bacon and his wife.

We were served by Miss Peskutt and another young lady of somewhat similar build, and had a most excellent dinner, which revived memories of salad days across the water.

We had clam broth and stewed little-neck clams. We had fried bluefish and broiled scrod, lobster croquettes with deviled sauce and broiled red snappers. We had broiled venison steak and fried sweet potatoes, string beans, stewed tomatoes and Oyster Bay asparagus. We had sweetbreads with mushrooms, and green goose with apple sauce, and succotash and fried oyster plant. We had stewed diamond-back terrapin, and chicken pie, domestic style. We had cranberry pie and Washington pie and pumpkin pie. We had frozen pudding and tutti frutti and pistachio ice-creams. We had Catawba grapes, Florida oranges and Canton ginger. We had chow-chow and piccagli and sweet mixed pickles. And we had a full, true and particular account of Judge and Mrs. Bacon's day's doings.

They had been to the Tower, and had suffered divers tribulations and much uncouth pleasantry in the narrow passages and staircases.

"I reckon they lived slimmer in those days than we do, Josiah," said Mrs. Bacon, comfortably.

"Missed more'n they knew," wheezed the judge, as he trifled, in a businesslike way, with his diamond-back terrapin.

"No, I don't think we missed much," said the lady, in reply to a question. "If there's one thing I can imagine, it's the top of a narrow, stone staircase when I've seen what the bottom's like."

"Same here," said the judge; and just then Colonel Sawler came quietly in, and was received with acclamation.

It was wonderful how happy they all were together. They called one another by their Christian names, and might have been members of one family. The judge was indeed "judge," but the colonel was Dan; and there were George and Sam and Bart and Irving, and ever so many more.

The colonel's eye, roving jovially around the table, caught mine at last. He gave me a smiling nod, with a humorous lift of the brows, but no slightest trace of annoyance or acknowledgment of the skeleton at the feast. He chatted right and left, and smiles and laughter marked his path.

It was not till we were in the smoking-room, and he had had small talks here and there with his friends, that he swung up a chair, and sat down beside me.

"Well, sir, how's things? Have a nice time out there?" he asked, twinkling.

"What kind of a trick do you call this to play on a man's house, colonel?" I said, grumpily.

"Trick? What trick?" in a tone of great surprise.

"Well, you know; I let the house to you for the use of your wife and daughter, and——"

"But, my dear sir, you cannot object to my inviting a friend to pass a day or two with me."

"A friend?—say, sixteen, and they're not friends in the ordinary——"

"Oh, yes, they are, every one of 'em! They pay a trifle for the trouble they give, and for being fed like Christians, but"—and his gray eyes twinkled more than ever—"nothing to what they'd

pay in town, and then they wouldn't get what they liked to eat."

"And as to the house," I went on, knowing perfectly well that nothing would come of it, but determined to say my say and relieve my mind, "why, I simply didn't know it again!"

"House is right as a hair," he said, gently. "If you hadn't happened along you'd never have known anything about it. If you find an inch of paint or paper off I'll cover it with a dollar bill—every patch you can find. I haven't driven so much as a nail into the walls."

"Oh, I've no doubt you've done it very nicely, and I've no doubt you'll do very nicely out of it."

"Well, tidy!" he admitted, smilingly.

"I've half a mind to tell your friends—guests, I mean——"

"Friends is all right."

"—all about it, and hear what they think of it."

"Do," he said, smiling hopefully. "You can't tell 'em anything they don't know, but they'll enjoy your telling 'em, all the same."

I decided not to. The colonel saw it, and presently he said:

"I'm only sorry you came home so soon. If you'd waited just a week longer, you wouldn't have known anything at all about it, and you'd have had no chance to feel bad."

"There's no use in feeling bad, I suppose, but I'm bound to say it's not a thing I'd have taken any pleasure in doing myself, colonel."

"You bet!" he smiled, knowingly. "It's meant a sight of hard work and some tall thinking, but"—nodding his head gently several times—"on the whole, it's turned out satisfactory."

"Quite a pile, I suppose," I said, with a touch of scorn.

"Dollars? We-ell," he drawled, "twasn't that I was thinking of. All these folks have enjoyed their jaunt as they never would have done in the

other way, and some of 'em not at all. I brought over one hundred and sixty of 'em, all shapes and sizes"—and his eyes rested complacently on Judge Bacon as the crowning achievement—"young men and maidens, old men and women, and some children. And some of 'em have paid—though not near what they'd have paid in town—and some of 'em haven't paid a cent. Down Richmond way, I've got a houseful of schoolma'ams from my state. Mamie's bossing 'em, and they're having glory. They've had a holiday that'll keep 'em talking full blast for the rest of their natural lives, and make 'em teach as they never taught before, and not one of 'em's a cent out of pocket, 'cept what they've spent on candies and fal-lals. I daren't hardly go near 'em, they're so de-monstrative. Mind you," he said, hastily, to check an apologetic demonstration on my part, "I don't say but what I come out top. That's only right and natural. But not to the extent you've been thinking. I'm a business man, and I'm happiest when I can run business and pleasure on one string, which ain't always possible. I've enjoyed it, and they've all enjoyed it. You've enjoyed your little outing, and your house won't be a cent the worse for it."

And it was not. When we came in, ten days later, the place was as we left it—not a scratch on the walls, and everything as clean as a new pin.

And sometimes, as I sit at table, I see Judge Bacon's massive figure looming large among the children. And I see Miss Peskutt's anxious face floating about the room, and red-turbaned mammy's kindly black face and flashing teeth. And I think of diamond-back terrapin and broiled red snappers; of Washington pie and chow-chow; of succotash and pistachio ice-cream; and, not unpleasantly, of Colonel Sawler and his houseful of schoolma'ams down Richmond way.



FEW there are who love wisely; fewer still who have not loved too well.

## ROSE LEAVES

By Madison Cawein

AH, me! the rose leaves fall—  
The rose leaves fall and fade;  
And by the wall, in shade funereal,  
Like some pale, gentle maid,  
The lily bloom is laid.

Red, red the rose leaves fall—  
And in the trembling trees,  
That stretch their ancient arms about the hall,  
Burdened with mysteries,  
Whispers the ghostly breeze.

Softly they fall and fall—  
The rose leaves drop and die;  
And over them dull, nameless beetles crawl;  
The glow-worm trails its eye  
Of flame, and glimmers by.

Crumpled the rose leaves fall—  
They strew the garden way,  
For snails to slime, and spotted toads to sprawl,  
And, plodding past each day,  
Coarse feet to tread in clay.

Alas! they fade and fall—  
And Beauty, carved in stone,  
With broken hands veils her dead eyes, and, tall,  
Within the moonlight lone,  
Statues a marble moan.

Slowly they fall and fall—  
And strew the fountained pool,  
That, in the nymph-carved basin by the wall,  
Reflects with darkness cool  
Ruin made beautiful.

Sadly the rose leaves fall—  
Like tears of blood they stain  
The crumbling dial-stone, whose shattered ball  
And disk the sun and rain  
Have seamed with many a vein.

Faintly they fall and fall—  
 Around him where he stands,  
 And, through their mist, beyond the years' recall,  
 Out of the past's dim lands,  
 She seems to reach pale hands.

Silent the rose leaves fall—  
 And now, again, they meet  
 Beside the fountain there; she, in her shawl  
 Of lace, from head to feet  
 White as the moon, and sweet.

Dimly the rose leaves fall—  
 And now, again, it seems  
 He holds her clasped close to his heart, his all!  
 The woman of his dreams!—  
 Or is't the moon's pale gleams?

Dead, dead the rose leaves fall—  
 And in the stress and urge  
 Of winds that strew them sadly over all,  
 With melancholy surge,  
 There seems to sigh a dirge:

"See how the rose leaves fall  
 Upon thy dead, O soul!—  
 The rose leaves of the love that once in thrall  
 Held thee, beyond control,  
 Making thy heart-world whole.

"Yea, let the rose leaves fall,  
 Around and all above  
 The face within thy heart, beneath the pall,  
 The perished face thereof,  
 The beautiful face of Love."



## GOOD EXCUSES

"HE married her because she was such a brilliant conversationalist."  
 "Yes, I know; but——"  
 "Oh, he got a divorce from her for the same reason."



TEACHER—Anonymous means without a name. Now, which little boy can  
 give me a sentence showing the correct use of the word?  
 SAMMY—Our new baby is anonymous.



# WHAT IS CALLED SOCIETY

By Julian Hawthorne

FAIR from me be it, O fellow-sinners, to preach from this pulpit a sermon on, or against, Society! Evolution is a more moving preacher than I can ever hope to be, and is even now at work. Rather let it be my more humble function to sing a sort of epithalamium on this thing whereof we are the constituents; a prose poem in celebration of the espousals of Society with her bridegroom Death, which, according to the prognostications of all the sages, are now in preparation. For the economists, the philosophers, the socialists, are at one in this—that the old order of human association, which has so long endured, is on the verge of being severed or extinguished; and that a quite new dispensation is on the way. It will not be precipitated by the coal-famine, the food-scare, the Standard-Oil bugbear, or the Steel-Merger, alone; these are but straws indicative of the wind's direction. It is coming for no outward reason in particular, any more than there is an outward reason why the planet, day after day, swims through a hitherto unvisited region of space. It is made that way, and cannot help its own progress. When Society, as we know it, ends or alters, it will be due to causes inherent in the composition of its members; they will be tired of the thing that is, and will effectively desire that which is to come. Or, possibly, they will be allowed no conscious say in the matter; but will wake up some morning, and find themselves otherwise than as they were when they went to bed.

I am aware that the steps of history are supposed, in the common report of

them, to have been prompted or energized by this or that egregious individual; thus, Alaric the Goth overran Italy; Alexander, Persia; Cæsar, Gaul and Britain; Napoleon, Europe; so, on the spiritual plane, did Buddha oust Brahma; Jupiter usurp for Westerners the prestige of Buddha; Christ overturn Jupiter; and Mrs. Eddy introduce still another interpretation of the secret of the Sphinx. And so, again, in the region of mind, did Plato supplant Pythagoras, and was himself improved upon by Aristotle, who yielded, in due season, to the medieval mystics and alchemists, who were shown up to their confusion by Francis Bacon, who gave intellectual birth to Newton, Kant and Hegel, Darwin and Spencer, down to our contemporary college presidents and arts-and-crafts professors. Yes, these personages are connected by name with the periods of development indicated; and so is Columbus with the discovery of this continent. But that Earth Spirit that Goethe mentions, who plies his work at the roaring loom of Time, though he says very little in language articulate to us, is at last being shrewdly suspected of being at the bottom of it all; he uses men as pawns in the great game he plays, without the slightest personal reference to them. If not Napoleon, then he would have selected some other puppet; if not Bacon or Plato, then some Smith or Jones. He wishes to let us down as easily as possible—that is all; he does not care to frighten us with the vision of his own astounding features. He masks himself as this or that “distinguished individual;” who, if the truth were

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known, is as much astonished as we are to find himself functioning as the moving element in things which he comprehends as little as we do. Does any one imagine that Mr. Rockefeller, or Mr. Morgan, or the late Mr. Carnegie—now departed hence to the Land of Altruria—is, or was, in the least necessary to the birth of the industries and interests with which he is nominally associated? Certainly not! He simply happened to be in the way of the current of supernal electricity that chanced to be launched at that moment; if not he, then some one else. Things get themselves done; we are, at most, instruments, not causes. But, in order to "save our faces," as the Celestials would say, we are led to believe that the case is otherwise; and thus afford pretext for the publication of our Dictionaries of Distinguished Names, and for our articles in magazines exalting the latest examples of success. In a word, nobody ever did, thought, or originated anything, since this world began to roll; but everything was originated, thought and done through the mediumship of some helpless creature or another. And so it will be with the end of the present form of Society, and the beginning of the new one. It will not be the work of William Morris, or of Walt Whitman, or of Edward the Seventh, or of Mr. Gompers, or of the Mad Mullah, or of Tom Johnson, John Mitchell, or Mrs. Astorbilt; each of these, no doubt, has his or her poor little ideas and plans; but they will go for nothing. The new pattern is already designed on that roaring loom we spoke of, and will be revealed to us when the weaver is ready, do or not do what we may.

That much-overworked personage, The Stranger from Altruria, or The Visitor from Another Planet, or The Man of A.D. 2000 or 20,000—whatever his visiting-card may read—is apt to drop in upon us at about this time, and to wish to know about things. However he introduce himself, he is always to be detected by two marks: he knows everything, except the state of things among us at the period of his advent;

and his otherwise superior and unruffled temperament is still capable of being intelligently curious on that score, and mildly shocked, or amiably surprised, at the information that is afforded him on the subject. Were I to evoke him now, I should expect him to be hopelessly puzzled by the conundrum: How has our Society contrived to last so long as it has? Other institutions yield some sort of return for the capital invested; but Society, which costs so much in money, time, and energy—what dividend does it pay? At the close of a lifetime of it, when the funeral cortège is ready to start for the cemetery, and the big tombstone is carved and set in its place, in what degree or manner is the late occupant of the corpse in the catafalque better for his long endurance of the trouble of keeping up his end in the social see-saw? And, yet, we cannot help thinking that every effect must have its cause; things that do not, somehow, pay, are not encouraged to exist; how, then, does Society pay its votaries, and what manner of currency is used in settling its bills? One would think people would have found out the deception ages since, and have turned to something more remunerative; but no, here we are, in this twentieth century, still hard at it, and many of us persuaded it will last out our time, and time itself. Others, as we have seen just now, think otherwise; and that an epithalamium is in order. But, meanwhile, the Distinguished Visitor puzzles himself in vain over the riddle: What has given it so long life, and what does it all mean?

Perhaps, the strangest part of it is that most of us, at least once in a lifetime, have been visited with a perception of what real Society is. Breaking through the grim routine, it reveals its lovely lineaments to us; and, as Patmore says:

"Some give thanks, and some blaspheme,  
And most forget; but, either way,  
That, and the child's unclouded dream,  
Is all the light of all our day."

More familiar than that stanza—so familiar, indeed, that one feels a little

shy about repeating it yet again—is that sentiment from the famous poem collaborated by Omar and Fitzgerald; amid much that is pretty and ingenious, and much more that is sentimental, meretricious, melodramatic and silly—very silly—the one verse in which are combined sense and beauty, thus:

“A book of verses, underneath the bough,  
A loaf of bread, a jug of wine—and Thou  
Beside me, singing in the wilderness—  
Oh, wilderness, were Paradise enow!”

That verse describes true Society from the pagan point of view. Pagan or not, we might go further and fare worse; we have done so, in fact. Have you not, at the club, toward the small hours, sometimes seen some young friend of yours remove his perfecto from his aristocratic lips, cast his handsome eyes toward the cornice, and murmur that quatrain, in tones of profound approval? He is thinking of last evening, when he sat at a secluded table in the Palm Room, with Mabel in the chair opposite; they were consuming together some green crème de menthe; the loaf was represented, perhaps, by some saltine biscuits, and the singing by the strains of the band, performing in an adjoining apartment. It was the best he could do, and it served his turn; it made him appreciate the poet. True Society—Mabel, music, and crème de menthe, under the frond of the artificial palm! That is the guise under which the Divine vision manifested itself to him; it was as much of the Divine as he could comprehend. At the same time, it is evident that he comprehended but a small part of the truth. He was far from realizing all that the verse implies—that the spirit of it, if allowed way, would sweep away forever from the earth all that we now know as Society. For him, once in a way, the Mabel episode was all very well—was quite the nicest thing going, at the moment, perhaps. But would he, for that, be prepared to forsake his connection with that wonderfully complex tissue of inanities and insanities known to him under the name of Society? What! give up the dinners, the

cotillions, the amateur circuses, the stag-parties, the country club, calls, polo, golf, autoing, yachting. Saratoga, Newport, Tuxedo, Lenox, Europe, gossip, social prestige! Hardly! What, indeed, would be the sense in giving these up, since one may have them and Mabel and the crème de menthe into the bargain—nay, can hardly have the latter apart from the former?

But, persists our inevitably enlightened but indispensably dense friend from Altruria, in what way, precisely, does Society pay you for what you spend on it? How do the accounts balance at the end of the term? The reply is not very explicit. A fellow has to go in for all that sort of thing; the other fellows and women do. One does the proper thing in the proper style, and keeps in the swim, and gets his name in the reports of the functions, and wears correct clothes, and talks the up-to-date lingo, and plays and laughs and carries on, and all that sort of thing. Yes, it is hard work, in a way; one feels a bit off in the mornings, sometimes; and, maybe, it's a bit monotonous—couldn't help being, you know! Well, you might call it a bore; but, if you come to that, pretty nearly everything is a bore, and what else is there—in Society? What else does one talk about? Oh, about what one has done, or expects to do, and what other fellows and women have done, or are suspected of doing, and so on. You see, there always seems to be a good time ahead; but, after it's come and gone, and one thinks it over, it does not seem so good, after all. Maybe, that half-hour in the Palm Room with Mabel was the best one of the lot; but that can come only once in a dog's age.

But why not marry Mabel, the Altrurian, in his professional innocence, suggests, and so have the fun, and nothing but the fun, all the time?

On the contrary, we explain to him, being married to Mabel would have the effect of simply cutting out the Palm Room business altogether. Being married takes the poetry out of the thing; that fellow who wrote the Ru-

báiyát was not married to his Saki—you may bank on that! The only chance for the Rubáiyát lark, after a fellow is married, is to get some other fellow's Mabel into the Palm Room—the *sub-rosa* idea, you know—and that is fun enough; but it is about the hardest work of all. For, if you get found out, officially, of course, it's liable to be all day with you. Suppose you get black-listed; then where are you? People may know about it in a certain way—not really *knowing*, you understand—and it's all right; but to have technical evidence against you is bad form. Yes, no doubt, it might be safer to cut that whole thing out; but then, if a fellow could never look forward to having a bit of a lark with a married woman, what would become of Society? What would there be to gossip about at afternoon teas? If husbands and wives were to keep themselves to themselves all the time, Society would die on the spot. Not that there need be anything actually wrong, you understand; as a matter of fact, there seldom is anything actually wrong, in that way, in Society; only just the hint of it, so to speak—the dancing along on the brink. As much as that there must be; for a man must feel himself alive, once in a while; and, to be frank, there is more life in dancing on that brink with another fellow's Mabel, than in anything else!

To the untrained ears of our Altrurian, this, of course, would sound rather worse than it is; as if the main vitality of Society depended upon the stimulus provided by trifling with the Seventh Commandment. But it is difficult to make him see the fine discriminations we are able to draw; it's all in the way you look at the thing—in the way you feel about it. And, after all, what is the use in attempting to account for Society on profit-and-loss principles? Society is here; we cannot do without it, and we are bound to make the best of it. It is easy enough to abuse it. You may say that it is under obligation to be always doing something, and never has any product to show for the doing. Its members must always be

putting forth efforts, taxing their invention, organizing things, making physical exertions, sacrificing sleep, nerves, health. Under whatever adverse circumstances of personal feeling or condition, they are bound to maintain a smiling front, to participate in projects for which they care nothing; to herd together with semblance of joy when they are merely suffering boredom; to meet at certain fixed times of the year at specified points on the earth's surface, though they may prefer to be elsewhere. They may be prompted to laugh a great deal, and yet to have nothing to laugh at that would amuse a child, or a wise man, or a kindly man. They may be impelled continually to seek for entertainment and stimulus, and yet so to live as to dull their sensitiveness to stimulus and their ability to be entertained. They may, in short, be obliged to expend a vast amount of energy, not only without visible return, but in such a manner as to render them indifferent to such return as they get. We may admit, finally, that, after having expended ourselves during the twenty or thirty years of our social activity in the hardest and most unrelenting kind of work, we find ourselves, at the end, in the position of servants of a master who never cared anything for us, who has given us no reward that affords satisfaction in the retrospect, who has countenanced us only as long as we were useful to him, and who stands ready to cashier us the moment we show symptoms of restiveness under our servitude.

All this may be conceded; but what then? Are you, or am I, responsible for Society as it exists? People having wealth and leisure cannot help associating together. In order to render their association mutually tolerable, they must be clean, well-dressed, and polite. Politeness stimulates love and self-suppression; but it is obvious that no one can really love everybody with whom he is brought in contact; so there must be white lying; but, since that is understood, there is no real deception.



Again, self-suppression must often be motivated by a far-sighted selfishness; we know our aims and interests, and are bound to consult them; but shall we therefore be hoggish in our manners, too? And with what justice can our social activities be attacked? Man is a gregarious animal, and what are our social functions but methods for making our gregariousness as agreeable as possible? Because we are wealthy and have leisure, we cannot sit still at home and do nothing. Here is a quantity of human energy; it must be given vent, somehow. In order to prevent this energy from creating disorder, there must be a measure of organization and coöperation. Let those who blame us for the monotony of our devices for entertainment, suggest something better. We have always shown ourselves hospitable to novel ideas, from theosophy to monkey dinners; and we are ever ready to welcome them. Nor can the accusation of not "doing good to our less fortunate fellow-creatures" be sustained against us. Apart from fanaticism, we give largely in charity, both directly in doles, and indirectly in the proceeds of charity balls and other festivities. Some of us visit the slums, and take interest in the way the other half lives. We support the Church, and pay unexampled salaries to good preachers. Nor are we slack in the cultivation of our minds; we read magazines and books, attend lectures and the opera and theatre, and invite to dinners and receptions distinguished persons of all sorts. Above all, perhaps, we deserve the gratitude of the community for keeping up high standards of refined living. It is to our patronage that the cultivation of the fine arts is due; these beautiful private houses, with their harmonious decorations, their pictures and statues and objects of vertu, not to speak of the great clubs and hotels, and office and public buildings, exist because of Society. And high-bred horses, dogs and cattle, the improve-

ment in the comforts of travel, the development of means of communication, if they are not due exclusively to Society, are so in a great degree. But for us, the world would be a very surly, hard and uncongenial place.

These benefits must be acknowledged, and the tear of sentiment and sympathy be shed over them. Nevertheless, the fact must be faced that Society—Fine Society—is an anachronism, and will presently be a back-number, recognize as cordially as we may the involuntary nature of its faults, and the amiability of its virtues. There will always be grades and classifications of men in a community and in mankind at large, just as there is subordination as well as coöperation in the various parts of the individual human body. But the hour is at hand when there will no longer be a part of the body-corporate that has nothing to do but amuse itself. Every man-jack of us, before long, will have to be qualified to make some substantial addition to the useful products of civilization, and no longer merely consume them when others have made them. And, though preachers may arise to expound this doctrine, and leaders to put it into practice, yet, it will really be accomplished, as usual in such matters, independently of conscious human coöperation, because the time for it is come. The struggles of its opponents help it forward just as fast as do the good offices of its advocates. The present state of things is the result of a mistaken, but natural and inevitable, experiment; based upon the notion, that, because a man was relieved from the necessity of grubbing for his bread-and-butter, therefore he could be content, and could successfully ignore and forego his innate tendency to productive industry. The experiment has proved its own futility. Society has tried play without work, and has found it harder than work itself. Work is not a curse, as tradition has led us to imagine; it has seemed to



be a curse for two reasons: First, because it has been done mainly by what is regarded as the inferior portion of the community, instead of by the whole community without reservation; and, secondly, because, owing to this neglect of duty on one side, the other side was forced not only to do more than its share, but to do it without reference to the fitness or willingness of the individual for the task assigned to him. And, inasmuch as the workman was poor and the employer rich, and the introduction of machinery compelled the investment of capital before work could be done, the workman no longer was able to own the tools of production; and, therefore, was given wages, instead of owning his own product. Thus, he became dependent on the employer or capitalist, and a mere appendage of the machine he worked with; compulsion deprived him of interest in his work, and prevented him from putting his individuality into it, and it became to him a curse, indeed. But it is at least as harmful to human nature to be a slaveholder as to be a slave; and, regarding the economical aspect of the transaction, the money taken from the pocket of the worker, and put into the pocket of the employer or capitalist, simply gave the latter more than he could make good use of; after spending all he could on luxuries, he was forced to invest the rest in further industrial machinery; till, at last, there came to be so much machinery that it begot overproduction—or, rather, the appearance of it, due to the fact that the workman, restricted to his wages, could not buy as much as he would have done had he been better off. Because there was overproduction, the machinery had to be stopped, and the workman laid off; whereby he became poorer than ever, and less able to relieve the congestion of products by his purchases. You see, in short, how the thing works round in a vicious circle.

But, when everybody realizes that nobody is "above" productive in-

dustry, but that, on the contrary, training and study are needed to bring one up to the level of it; then, schools and colleges will become factories; and factories, schools and colleges; and Society, as a distinction, will disappear in the merging of the entire community in a Society that is universal. Every workman can then do that work for which he is naturally fitted; and division of labor will not, as now, mean division of a given product among several hands, but that the producers of each product shall coöperate in a larger one. Machinery, gradually becoming automatic, will perform the drudgery, and thus set men free to supply what only human intelligence and human hands can effect.

And what, then, will have become of the verse of Omar Fitzgerald? Well, we may not see any more of the Mabel-and-green-menthe version of it; but the condition the poet had in mind will come to pass, and something more and better. For Omar Fitzgerald is pagan; but the ultimate Society is nothing less than the redeemed form of man. We have, and have always had, in addition to our Fine Society, our Society based upon intellectual kinship and interests; and, when we have added to that intellectual affinity something of the heart, in the shape of unfeigned mutual human good-will, then the Land of Beulah, where the sun shineth night and day—metaphorically, be it understood, for there is nothing Arctic about that genial realm—will no longer be far off.

Poor Society! In a way, what a naïve, innocent, helpless thing it was! One pictures it as a graceful, pretty, heedless figure, skipping along above the crust of volcanoes. It did not make itself; it does not know its doom; it is so eager to be happy, and so persistent in seeking that end; and, alas, so unsuccessful in its pursuit! Let us observe the pathetic, comely, not unamiable, yet heartless, creature a while, ere extinction overtakes her.

The History of Society—a volume worth inditing—must, of course, be the product of multifarious collaboration. Even in this age of travel and research, no one could do it all alone. Still, Society, in the sense in which we are considering it, is a comparatively recent and almost local phenomenon. Its ancestor in Europe was feudalism—the fighting men, the natural aristocracy—on one side, and their victims and serfs on the other. To-day, the traders and hucksters, grown rich, occupy the castles of their late baron masters, and sport their titles, though a remnant of the genuine nobles still survives, terrible examples of what happens to a generation that has outlived its era. But the physical force régime, while it lasted, stood on a sounder and juster foundation than does the money power at present in possession; and the latter will hardly last so long as the former did. It is, I repeat, comparatively local as well as recent; it could exist only in countries given up, as are those of Europe and America, to industrialism. Nevertheless, the world may still offer living examples of Society in all its stages, from the most primitive to that which now passes. Africa and Asia has each its social organization; and so have the Marquesas, Patagonia and Eskimoland. In the history I have suggested, the chapter on Asiatic Society will probably be assigned to Mr. Kipling; when I was in India, I had some glimpses only of the outside of it. That vast, mud-hutted population lives in villages, surrounded by walled stockades to keep out tigers and ghosts. The villages are governed by head-men; agriculture is the only industry; the agriculturists—that is, the people—are owned by the Bunniah, who are a race of money-lenders. They own them because they have bought them. The manner of the purchase is this: the farmer has a boy born to him, and it is Hindu etiquette to celebrate that event. Celebrations cost money, even in Hindu villages; the local Bunniah ad-

vances a sum; it may be twenty dollars, or a hundred and twenty, according to circumstances. The celebration takes place, and then the borrower begins his life-work—the repayment of the debt, with interest. His tools, his hut and its furniture are the Bunniah's, to begin with; his labor belongs to the same individual, so does his product; but, in order to keep him going, the Bunniah allows him, in lieu of wages, just enough grain to afford him and his family subsistence while he and they work. Once in a while, however, comes a famine; and then the Bunniah withholds the grain, and the farmer and his family starve to death; which is no loss to the Bunniah, but a gain, rather; the country is over-populated, anyway. The interest on the loan has already repaid the loan itself many times over; but the indebtedness remains just the same, and is handed on from father to son. The son will add to it the amount it costs him to celebrate his son's birth; and so on, indefinitely. This is a very ancient and stable form of Society; we have copied some features of it in our Western civilization! But it is disturbed here by such innovations as labor-unions and strikes, which are unknown to Hindus, and which tend to obstruct the operations of those to whom God has, in His wisdom, entrusted the industries of our country. As for women in India, officially, they are perfect slaves, and never appear or suggest themselves; and, yet, nowhere more than in India may a woman rule the roost, provided she has it in her to do it. Profound are the depths of those domestic interiors; wonderful are their revelations, if only you can get at them! It is only lately that widows could exist in India; now, suttee is cut out of the programme, but, probably, nobody regrets it more than the widows themselves, whose condition cannot properly be described in these pages. Yet, these same widows may effect marvelous things if they have the nerve for it; and as for wives, and still more,

mothers and mothers-in-law, they may be, and often are, thoroughly despotic—and yet abject slaves all the time. This is one of those many things which prompt white men, who have lived thirty years in India, to confess that they know much less about the people than they fancied they did after living there three months.

Another institution that obstructs the foreigner is caste; in India, there are five hundred thousand and odd of these among the three hundred thousand of the population; and, since the rules prevent persons of one caste from having anything to do—in certain matters—with those of all others, the embarrassment is not difficult to understand. We are far behind our Aryan progenitors in this respect; even the caste of Vere de Vere is not worth mentioning in the same breath with the least of the Hindu ones, for exclusiveness. Society, as it exists among the native princes, the rajahs and maharajahs, is not interesting; though, with them, as elsewhere, the women sometimes surprise one; ladies of the calibre of the Rani of Cawnpore are not rare, though, of course, very few of them enjoy the opportunities for development that she had.

The loveliest Society, in India, and, probably, in the world at present, is that of the native Christians. They have, to all intents and purposes, walked out of Holy Writ into the Twentieth Century. They look like the sacred pictures by the Old Masters, and their lives and characters are as nearly perfect in their selflessness and mutual service as human nature can admit of. Their only pleasure in possessing things is that they may give them to others; and their only motive and object in life is to be good and kind to their fellows; all with the most exquisite humility and innocent gentleness. We of the West have not been familiar with this type for now some nineteen hundred years; but it is worth knowing that there are such people, and that, with

the utmost poverty and simplicity of life, they seem wonderfully rich and happy. I suppose the explanation of them may be that in the unchristianized Hindu, race, tradition and caste take the place of selfhood and character among us; and, when the influence of these is removed, they become literally unselfish and truly humble and mutually loving. The white missionaries, among whom are some of the best sort of people we can produce, stand off from these converts of theirs, and admire them reverently at a distance. The temple they thought they were building completed itself beyond their skill and knowledge, as one not made by hands. It would be strange were the beginnings of the New Christianity to take its rise in the East.

When I call to mind German Society, I behold a scene composed partly of comfortable porcelain stoves and partly of open-air beer-gardens, with a band discoursing excellent classical music to hundreds of honest German families, sitting beneath trees at little tables. The military element is there, of course, but I look away from it; it does not appear to me natural or essential to the real German character. They are a kindly, domestic, sentimental people. There is, as it were, a mother in every German woman of whatever age; and a confirmed old bachelor would seem out of place there. There is a rich picturesqueness and warmth about them; a storied background, full of poetry, *Mährchen* and famous traditions. Their prodigious intellectuality does not displace a certain childlikeness in the very marrow of them. The German is, perhaps, a trifle stagy, a bit self-conscious—a little vein of harmless humbug running through him; but what huge good qualities he has—what refinement mixed up with his coarseness! His unctuousness, his *Brüderschaft*, his impulse to kiss and hug his friends of either sex, embarrass us somewhat; but the solidarity and good-fellowship of the nation is, perhaps, one of the

fruits of these traits. They seem to like to keep close together, herd under one another's noses closer than we like to do. Delicacy is not their forte; they are like one huge family. There is immense vitality in them, and patriotism and materiality, with which their philosophic tendency contrasts oddly; but, in truth, their philosophy does not penetrate into them much deeper than their minds. They are fond of chaffering and huckstering, and are rather "near" as regards money and property; they have never been a wealthy people, and are accustomed to count the cost of everything. Science is their strong suit; they have the patience, the system, the particularity, the imagination. As for their army, each German family has a soldier in it, so it comes home to them, and they are proud of it; but, at bottom, they do not like wars. They approve of the discipline, in the army as in all other things; they do not like the expense, though hitherto they have stood it manfully. They delight in the loyalty of which the army is a manifestation, and in the glory and power, actual and potential, of which it is the guardian. But, behind all that, lurks the thought, this killing and conquering does not pay. They admire their smart little Kaiser, but will not be sorry when he gets older, and, perhaps, wiser. The army itself, meanwhile, is composed of two very different parts—the men and the officers. The latter are scions of the aristocracy, which is portentously profuse in Germany, all the sons inheriting the title. They inherit also much of the brutality and tyrannous instinct of the robber barons of old; though, of course, they can assume an admirable external polish and ceremony of manner, when there is occasion for it. But the rank and file in America, or even in England, would not endure for a day the personal degradation which accompanies the training of every German soldier. On the streets and in the cafés, also, the behavior of the officers toward civilians is autocratic and overbearing to what seems to us an intolerable degree. They embody by far

the most repulsive feature of German civilization. Objectionable, likewise, to our prejudices is the condition of women in Germany. Among the lower orders, they are used as beasts of burden and as draft animals, and they perform all manner of heavy farming work; one often sees peasant women, far gone in pregnancy, straining under heavy loads. Among all classes, they are regarded as the inferiors of the men, and are treated, at best, with only an outward and perfunctory courtesy. A German thinks nothing of shoving a woman into the gutter or taking precedence of her at the refreshment-table, both in public and in private houses. German women are expected to breed children, and to keep the house; any intrusion on their part into higher matters—if there be any higher—is viewed with disfavor. This attitude toward women is disguised and veiled as we get higher up in the social scale; but it is present everywhere. Fortunately for the domestic peace, the ladies, as a rule, accept their fate very meekly, and do not appear conscious of being ill-treated. There is no lack of family affection among Germans; there is a broad-bottomed amiability and demonstrative *Gemüthlichkeit* which amuses the foreign observer. Perhaps, after all, Germans estimate their own women more justly than we do.

But it is necessary to bear in mind fundamental conditions of this sort in our contemplation of German Society; because, on the surface, the "best" Society in any European country appears very similar to the others and to our own. Travel and general intercourse have much modified distinctions which were conspicuous fifty years ago. The lower, untraveled orders still show their old idiosyncrasies; but, as we rise in the scale, the freemasonry of good social form prevails. Of course, in Germany, rank has the *pas* in all things; the Kaiser sets the tune, and all below him follow in their degree. There is a certain fixed way and style of doing things, handed down from afar. You are never surprised by individual ec-



centricities, as you are here sometimes; wherever you find yourself, you know what phrases to employ and what behavior to observe. But, the outward form being accorded, all the rest is easy and comfortable enough; you bow, you laugh, you gossip, you eat peas with your fork, quite as at home. When a royal personage enters the room, you are supposed to rise to your feet, and look particularly polite and pleased; and you must remember titles in your address. The morality of German Society varies, within limits, according to the temper of the ruler. But no such latitude is permitted to women, either unmarried or married, as obtains with us; if a man and a woman have the opportunity, it is all up with the woman, so far as her reputation is concerned. Nevertheless, or, possibly, for that very reason, I am inclined to think that there is quite as much female chastity in the Vaterland as can be found elsewhere. There is certainly no such jocund exploitation, as here, of delicate relations between the sexes. Germans are less unsettled and therefore less cynical than we are; and there is no great German joke, to correspond with the American. They have their own vein of humor, but, on the whole, take themselves seriously. They believe they are the best thing that ever happened; and their new re-nationalization has stimulated their satisfaction with themselves. There is, however, a religious division in the country, and the socialists are making headway; so that it would be rash to regard Germany as the anchor of Europe.

In Paris, one may do almost as one likes. So many incongruous elements mingle in the Society there that, if you are reasonably civilized in your conduct, you will pass well enough. The political vicissitudes and philosophical vagaries of the last hundred years have mixed things up very thoroughly. The legitimist, the imperialist and the proletarian live side by side, and, pretenses and assumptions aside, one is about as good as another. There is

always a possibility of excitement and surprise in a Parisian drawing-room; the thing that appears there seldomest is vulgarity—the very thing to which our best Society is most liable—leaving out, of course, Cambridge and Boston and the South. Every Frenchwoman, and almost every Frenchman, knows how to behave; and their language is an inimitable medium for the expression of the wit, the courtesies and the felicities of the salon. Manners, and brains of some sort, are the two amulets which open doors for one in Paris; and the charm of mere intellect, in its social manifestation, was never carried further than in that wonderful city. It is apt to be seductive and even demoralizing to the newcomer; because there appears to be a total absence of prejudices. You may profess any heresy, social or intellectual, that you choose; and, if you do it well, it will be welcomed. No topic is tabooed, so long as you treat it with verve and resource. Only prosiness and stupidity find lions in the path; but you may be intolerant, prejudiced, fanatical; and, if you are also eloquent, you will have your success. The three graces of the Parisian salon are charm, brilliance and audacity. One cause of the allurements of French Society is that their interest in the thing you bring them is not feigned; they will manifest an enthusiasm as genuine as it is facile. This is partly the result of their inexhaustible curiosity and hospitality toward new subjects, and partly of an expansive, though shallow, good-nature. But they are sirens, all the same, with the true siren fickleness; after they have flattered and made much of you and sucked you dry, they turn away from your shriveled skin and dry bones, and tune their sweet pipes for the next hero and victim. Nothing so much as Paris at once puffs up self-conceit, and pricks it again. They bear their dead no malice; and, if the corpse can galvanize new life into itself, they will run to meet it half-way, and delightfully destroy it all over again. They are the most affluent begetters and apprecia-



tors of fine arts in the world; and yet their influence on art has not been free from a tendency to debase and belittle it, because, as a rule, they are incapable of true reverence. No one can rival them in technique, method, innovation, invention; but, just because art is, and must be, the expression of the artist, French art is trivial, fickle and unsubstantial, in spite of its enormous cleverness and thorough workmanship. Artists of true creative imagination are rare in Paris, both in literature and in the other arts. When they do appear, they are more apt to be celebrated than to be understood by their own countrymen. On the other hand, all Parisian cultivation is artistic; your hostess at dinner, or in the drawing-room, is sure to be an artist of the finest sort; and the host will generally afford her expert support. Nothing can surpass the sensitive tact, the soothing, yet stimulating, softness of a stranger's reception in French Society; and whatever may be in him will appear at its best in that environment, so subtly and kindly is it wooed to expand itself, and so instant and cordial is the recognition of any merit. But, when you have ceased to be a stranger, and have leisure to observe this Society as it is in itself, it assumes a somewhat different aspect. There are strong forces at work there, under the polish and prettiness. Having cleared the decks by getting the young unmarried women into the far background, the grown-up folks find themselves more at liberty than we do—or than we ought to. Intrigue between the sexes is probably going on, and it is managed with consummate discretion and skill; but, in my opinion, there is very much less of it than a perusal of French novels would lead one to imagine. These agreeable people are disposed to shrink from the trouble and anxiety which the serious pursuit of illicit relations is prone to land them in; the attack which every man conducts against the women he meets is to be regarded rather in the light of a compliment to her charms, a conventional courtesy, than as a real attempt to subdue her. The actual

entanglements which result are very likely fewer than with us. Both sides in the conflict are so expert with their weapons that they find enjoyment enough in the sword play, without aiming at actual victory. These duels are very much like those between the men themselves on the field of honor; they are meant to show the spirit of the combatants rather than anything more serious. Besides, the existence of a large number of ladies in Paris who are openly prepared to accept attentions, and who, for the best of reasons, cannot be compromised, has the effect of relieving, in great measure, the pressure in other directions. At all events, the foreigner never need disquiet himself on the subject; whatever is going on, he may rest assured that he will detect nothing of it.

He may see more of intrigues of other kinds. France is far from being at peace, internally; the triangular conflict of the army, the church, the Jews, is always going on; and the legitimists and imperialists have by no means given up their hopes of cutting each other's throats, and overturning the republic. A few years ago, I used to hear, in Paris, from the man and woman on the street, frequent mutterings in favor of another Napoleon; those who desire the return of kings and queens are, of course, members of the exclusive set. But I suspect that the peculiar group of institutions which the French call the Republic, has been found better adapted to their real humor than they had at first supposed it would be; it is monarchical, imperialistic and democratic, all in one. The wild-eyed people, who profess to want nothing more than their own whim for government, are not, perhaps, so well satisfied; but, on the other hand, they never seem able to raise up a competent champion of their cause; and nowhere more than in France is a champion necessary, if you expect to get anything done. This complicated *pot-bouilli* simmers more or less gently in every Parisian drawing-room; and there is always the chance that it may suddenly boil over. But a people so

witty and sagacious as the Parisians, are really much more stable, once they get on their feet, than a more serious and substantial nation would be; because, no matter what project may be afoot, there is always the possibility that a *mot*—any unexpected incident—may knock it into a cocked hat. Only make a thing ridiculous in Paris, and that is the end of it; you may sleep easy with the bomb for a pillow; it will not go off. The French always appear to be in the very van of progress; but it would not surprise us if they were the last to arrive, after all—when the real new day breaks.

It is twenty years since I have lived in London; and, for aught I know, it may have altered essentially since then. But Society in London, in my time, was as near gratifying every normal yearning for comfort, pleasure, security, esthetic and intellectual nourishment, as mortal resources at this stage of civilization could supply. Comfort is the basis of English Society; not the uneasy luxury that we are prone to affect, but the genial, solid comfort that impels one to say, "Let me be thus forever!" English growth for a thousand years has been so natural and substantial—broadening slowly down, as Tennyson said, from precedent to precedent—that the English enjoy unequaled advantages. They have no trouble about finding out how best to do things; it was all found out for them long before; they merely grew into it. The round of their life is a daily illustration of the survival of the fittest; all the misfits have been spontaneously eliminated. Every way has been tried, and only the right way has lasted out. Everything is in order, beginning with the social classes; so that each person is at home where he is, and feels so, and is most comfortable that way, and is under no obligation to assert himself; history does that for him. The laborer is at his ease before the squire, the squire before the lord, the lord before the king, the king

before his people. The routine of Society life is so firmly established that one can almost go through a London season with his eyes shut; turning into the right houses at the right hours by memory, and saying the correct thing to the proper person by instinct. The dinners are perfectly cooked, perfectly arranged, and are served by servants so perfectly trained as to be not only inaudible, but invisible, unless you make a special point of watching for them; then you see ideals in livery. The conversation at table is just quiet enough to soothe you, and just bright enough to rouse you; the very woman is beside you whom you would have picked out for yourself; and at your other hand is the very man you wanted to see. Precisely the proper amount of the correct wines is served to you; and, after the ladies have retired, you rise and follow them exactly at the moment when to do that is a very little more agreeable than it would be to sit without them any longer. You enter the drawing-room in just the right mood, and there you participate in conversation just light enough to be easy, and just deep enough to make you feel your time is not wasted. The afternoon before, you had ridden or walked in Rotten Row, or you had visited the studios or the Academy, or had partaken of five o'clock tea, served to you with brown bread and butter, cut thin, by the comely young ladies of the family, with just the right touch of scandal in the gossip. After dinner, you may find yourself in a stall at the theatre or opera; in the morning, you breakfast at noon. Such is my vision of what the London season used to be twenty years ago; I say nothing of nights in the gallery at parliamentary debates, of afternoons at Lord's to see the cricket, of boat rides on the Thames, of days at Hampton Court, Greenwich, Windsor; or of incomparable weeks later on at English country-seats where you may do whatever in the world you please, and whatever you do seems the ful-

filment of your heart's desire. Is it so in England now? It did not seem as if the manner of life could ever change; and yet, I should be afraid to go there again, lest some change—which *could* not be for the better—should have occurred. And so, we come back to the moral of the story; when a thing has become perfect, deterioration or some other change begins; the perfect Society of England warns us that the end of the present institution known as Society is at hand.

When you think of it, what a wonderful thing it is! All over the civilized world, we find the people most favored by fortune, who are on the top, who have all material power and opportunity at their command, who might be anything or do anything, humanly speaking—we find these very people suffering under some strange disability to be, or do, anything; on the contrary, making a business of trying to solve the hopeless problem of doing nothing and enjoying it! And, to crown the absurdity, they call it Society! Is it not, rather, the most unsocial con-

dition conceivable? It makes no difference that many of the persons who make up this so-called Society are, at other times, busied about the world's work. The point is that, in so far as they are Society people, they are do-nothings.

It is a gigantic misconception. The only sane and durable basis of association is that which unites people in useful and beautiful production, adding to the wealth and charm of the world we live in. The pleasure of that association is endless, because it is creative, and is not self-seeking; its freedom is boundless, because it liberates and employs every worthy faculty of mind and heart; and its term is limitless, because progress toward good is infinite. At evening, when the work is done, go home and be happy with Mabel, and with her, and a few other choice companions, if you like, talk over the doings of the day to come. That is the coming Society; so we need not fear—to quote Omar Fitzgerald once more—to shatter "this sorry scheme of things entire," and "rebuild it nearer to the heart's desire."



## ELUSIVE SPRING

I HARK the bees, in mellow measure, hum  
 About the blossoms of the wilding plum;  
 I hear the warbler chant his golden stave,  
 Wave mounting skyward above wondrous wave;  
 I catch a riot of fair tones and tints;  
 I scent a wealth of balsams and of mints.  
 And yet, Spring's heart eludes her worshiper,  
 Lacking you, Love, Spring's sweet interpreter.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



"MY husband has ceased to love me."  
 "How do you know?"  
 "I can't make him miserable any more."

## A LITTLE STORY

I HEARD a little story, dear,  
 Last night, you really ought to hear.  
 The south wind, talking in its sleep,  
 Told how, that very noon, it played  
 Up and down the sunny steep,  
 Till it came upon—a maid!  
 It shook the still gold of her hair;  
 It kissed her as no mortal dare;  
 Teased her until the bees went home,  
 With something sweeter for the comb  
 Than honey-stuff—her laugh, her sigh,  
 Whereto Love tuned his lullaby;  
 Then straight away was selfish flown,  
 To sing and hear it all alone.  
 The south wind paused, and— By the way,  
 Where were you, Sweetest, yesterday?

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.



## DREADFUL!

STELLA—Mabel lost a diamond ring.  
 BELLA—Too bad! How did it happen?  
 “Jack didn’t propose.”



## THE REAL SUFFERER

MRS. GRAMERCY—Your husband must feel so much better since he was  
 cured of dyspepsia.  
 MRS. PARK—Yes, but not as much as I do.



## HAD USE FOR IT

BIBBS—I should like to be a philanthropist.  
 GIBBS—Why?  
 BIBBS—I need the money.

# THE WORLD WELL LOST

By Alfred Sutro

MISS MCAUSLANE was by no means best pleased, as she toiled up the stairs to her flat, to find her cousin perched on the landing, waiting for her.

"Ah, Walter," she said, waving the flowers that she held in her hand, "I've just been to buy these. Aren't they lovely?" She held them out, looking rather impatiently at him; then, fumbled with her latch-key, and paused. "You wish to see me?"

"That's not very hospitable, Janie!" replied Mr. Reynolds. "What do you think I've been kicking my heels for, here, this past half-hour?"

"The fact is that I'm—very busy," she began, restlessly tapping her foot; then, she opened the door, and, with a gesture, invited him in.

The flat, a little, three-roomed one, in a great block of "residences"—a cross between "workmen's dwellings" and the more aristocratic "mansions"—was of the most modest order; but the tiny hall led into a sitting-room of respectable size, which had the advantage of a top-light, and, evidently, served also as a studio. The furniture was scanty—an oak chest or two, a few chairs, a writing-desk, a little table on which tea-things were spread; the floor was stained, and a couple of bright rugs stood out like islands in an ocean. A number of canvases, framed and unframed, were stacked against the walls, which were painted a dull green, and relieved by several photographs of early Italian masters. A few bits of old brass and pewter were scattered about the place, but there was an entire absence of the more feminine knickknacks usually to be found in a lady's apartment.

"Sit down, won't you?" said Miss McAuslane. "But you mustn't keep me long, for I'm expecting some one."

There was a certain defiance in her tone, which the young man noted, with a sigh. She laid down the flowers, went out, and brought back a jar filled with water, into which she carefully put her chrysanthemums. "They are beauties, aren't they?" she said, as she placed the jar on the table. "Wonderful colors! I really must have a try at them!"

Her cousin sat down. "Are you going to give me some tea?" he asked.

"No, Walter, not to-day. I told you I was expecting some one."

"Mr. Cassadine?"

She frowned, and was silent for a moment; then she said, very coldly, "Yes, he's coming—to criticize my work. It's very good of him, isn't it?"

The young man gave a look around before he replied. "I suppose it is good of him, though——"

Miss McAuslane stopped him. "We've been through all this, Walter; there's no need to start it again! If that's all you have come to say to me——"

He was reproachful. "You've not been to see us for more than a month!"

"Is it as long as that?" she said; "I had no idea. But, really, you know, your people do nothing save lecture me, all the time, and that gets rather monotonous. They don't approve of my living alone, and want me to stay with them, and so forth. It's very good of them, of course, and I'm grateful; but, dear me, I can't be expected to regulate my life according to their ideas! It never occurs to them that I'm a free



agent, and fully entitled to do what I think right!"

"A girl of twenty!" muttered Mr. Reynolds.

"A girl of twenty—yes. But, seeing that ever since father died—and that's five years ago—I've had to earn my own living, and go out into the world, I'm rather different from other girls of my age. And that's just what your people won't see. While mother was alive, she let me go my own way, and I don't think she ever had cause to regret it. And that was in Paris, where a woman has to be more careful, I suppose, than here. The fact is, of course, that you all have conventional and hidebound ideas as to what a girl may do, and may not do, and forget altogether that I am an artist, and that the artist must necessarily be allowed more freedom than the ordinary woman, whose one thought in life is to get married! If you and I are to remain friends——"

"We used to be more than friends, Janie," said Mr. Reynolds, quietly.

She turned aside, impatiently. "That was mere boy-and-girl nonsense; all that's long over."

"Not with me. I love you—you know that well enough. I shall always love you."

Miss McAuslane moved restlessly to the window. "As I told you before, the best thing you could do would be not to see me—at least, for a time; that would be the most sensible."

"You don't care for me, then, Janie?" he pleaded. "Is there no chance for me?"

"My dear Walter, don't be absurd! Do you think that I change from week to week? I fancied all this was forgotten! Besides, you know very well that no two persons could be more unsuited than we. I care only for art, and art says nothing to you. And, then, I don't mean to get married, anyway. You had much better do as I tell you, and not come here for a bit."

He hung his head; then answered, doggedly: "You're my cousin; you're a young girl, alone in the world, and you need protection. And that pro-

tection you shall have, whether you seek it or not."

"Protection!" she cried. "It is more like persecution! You make me say horrid things to you, but, really, it is your own fault. What protection do I require? Am I a child? I have never heard such nonsense in my life! What have I to be protected against? You read too many sentimental novels, I think, my dear Walter!"

He sat quietly in his chair, and betrayed no sign of annoyance. "Mr. Cassadine is coming this afternoon?" he asked.

"I have told you," she answered, over her shoulder.

"He comes rather often, doesn't he?"

Miss McAuslane stamped her foot, and faced him, angrily. "Really, Walter, if you wish to quarrel, you are going the right way about it. Mr. Cassadine is my friend."

"Is that his photograph over there?"

"It is."

The young man rose, and went to the mantelpiece. "I'm not sure that I like his face," he said.

Janet laughed. "I am sorry. But, really, I can't see how that matters. Although you are a cousin of mine, I can scarcely allow you to choose my friends for me! And he'll be here very soon—and as, of course, you had rather not meet him——"

Mr. Reynolds put the photograph back in its place, and returned to his seat. "I've been making inquiries about Mr. Cassadine, Janie."

"Really!" This time her anger broke forth, uncontrolled. "You've been making inquiries!" She glared fiercely at him.

But he went on, wholly unmoved. "Yes. A young fellow I know works for the magazines; he's an artist, in a kind of way. I asked him to find out. It appears that Mr. Cassadine is married, and lives very unhappily with his wife."

"This is indecent—yes, indecent! I decline to listen to this backstairs gossip. We are not the housemaid and butler, discussing their master's affairs. You ought to be ashamed

of yourself—you ought, indeed!" She flung open the window, and stood by its side, as though she needed air.

But Mr. Reynolds persisted. "And—though it seems that was a good many years ago—and it's a thing I don't quite like mentioning to you—he was the co-respondent, if you know what that means, in a divorce-suit." His manner was so abashed and deprecating that Miss McAuslane was compelled to laugh, in spite of herself.

"Really!" she said. "Well, your 'artist' should have informed you that the husband was an abominable person, and lost his case."

Mr. Reynolds opened his eyes very wide. "How do *you* know this?"

"Oh, a friend of mine told me—and I know it's true, because he was a pupil of Mr. Cassadine's at the time."

"H'm—a nice subject, I must say, to discuss with a young girl!"

Miss McAuslane made a great effort at self-control; she left the window, walked to her cousin, and held out her hand. "My dear Walter, let's be friends. You've been very good to me, and I'm fond of you, of course. But, really, there must be no more of this—underhand spying. You say you love me—I'm sorry; I had far rather you trusted me. You may, you know; though, really, it is an abominable thing that I should have to defend myself, at all! That's the misfortune of being a woman. And now—don't you think—?" Again, she presented her hand.

Mr. Reynolds rose. "How often does he come here?" he asked.

She stamped her foot. "I decline to answer. You have no right to put such a question. I decline to say another word about him. It was he who got me my berth at the school—I owe everything to him. And he's actually good enough—he, the great artist—to come here and criticize my work. And you—"

"Oh, yes, he's a great artist, right enough," said Mr. Reynolds, discon-

tentedly. "But do you think he'd do these things for you if you were a man?"

"I don't think about it, at all; I don't see that it matters." But she blushed to the roots of her hair; and her cousin gave a violent start.

"By God! you're in love with him! Yes—that's what it is—I see!"

The girl's cheeks were still aflame, but anger swept everything before it. "This is an outrage!" she cried. "Leave me, please! You spy upon this man—ferret out things—and, then, you make these ridiculous insinuations. I call it contemptible! And you fancy you are entitled to do these things, because you are my cousin. I have stood all this long enough—your entreaties and sermons. If you'd had a particle of pride, you'd have taken my no for an answer, and left me in peace, long ago. I don't need your 'protection,' I don't need your friendship, or rudeness. You don't know how to treat a woman. I want to be left alone!"

The young man had listened, at first, with bowed head and a twitching lip; but, as she went on, he set his teeth hard, squared his chin, and looked steadily at her.

"You're my cousin," he said, "and you can't get over that. You won't marry me—you don't care for me—all right; that's done with. But you're a girl of twenty; and, say what you will, *you* don't know anything of the world, and it's my duty to watch over you; and that duty I will fulfil."

"Duty!" she sneered. "Let me put your own question to you: Would you consider it your duty if I were a man?"

Her sarcasm passed harmlessly over him. "Of course not," he said. "It's just that makes the difference. You may believe me; I shall never again ask you to marry me; but I find you here in the clutches of a dangerous man, and—I'll see this thing out."

"You'll see it out! What do you mean?"

"I mean what I say. He's coming

this afternoon—very well, I'll speak to him, myself."

She was trembling with passion. "If you dare——!"

"I shall do what is right," he said, "what it is my duty to do." And he sat himself down in a chair, crossed his legs, and waited.

Miss McAuslane moved furiously about the room. She went out and came back; put on her hat, and took it off again; and, at last, faced him once more.

"I can't turn you out," she said, coldly, "and I can't call a policeman. But you understand that, if you do this—if you venture to address one word to Mr. Cassadine—I shall never speak to you again as long as I live."

The young man winced, but he answered, cheerfully, "Oh, yes, you will! You'll realize in time how right I was!"

"I call you a brute!" she cried, passionately; "yes—a brute!" Then, suddenly, came a ring at the bell, and she darted out of the room; there was a colloquy on the landing, and she returned, followed by Mr. Cassadine, who smiled pleasantly at the young man.

"Your cousin tells me that you wish to speak to me," he said.

Walter had risen, and looked his enemy squarely in the face. Mr. Cassadine was a man of medium height, powerfully built, clean-shaven, with a big, massive head and thick, black hair, heavily streaked with gray. He met Walter's eye, unflinchingly; then, as though obeying a sudden impulse, stepped forward and patted him on the shoulder.

"Come, come," he said; "Miss McAuslane appears to imagine that you look askance upon my visiting her. I assure you, you have no cause. I am a painter, and she is a painter, and there is a camaraderie of the brush that, perhaps, only artists can understand. A great many young ladies do me the honor to come to me, and consult me; and, when a man is on the threshold of fifty, as I am, he may be

regarded as perfectly harmless! So, that's all right, don't you think?"

Mr. Cassadine spoke with the easy grace of a man of the world, but his manner was imposing, beneath all its charm; and Walter suddenly realized his own awkwardness. Yet, he held his ground.

"I should like a word with you, alone, sir," he said, respectfully. "If Janet wouldn't mind——"

But she burst in, indignantly: "There is nothing more to be said. I think Mr. Reynolds might now have the grace to go."

Walter addressed Mr. Cassadine. "If you will permit me, sir——"

Mr. Cassadine waved his hand. "My dear friend," he said to Janet, "perhaps, you will leave us for a moment or two. I am going out of town—my cab is at the door now, with my luggage—so that I cannot spare Mr. Reynolds many minutes—or you, either," he added, with a smile. "Oblige me." Janet went, without a word. "Now, Mr. Reynolds." Mr. Cassadine sat down, and looked at the young man.

Walter remained standing, and perplexity grew on him. He made a bold dash. "All I have to say, sir, is that my cousin is in love with you."

Mr. Cassadine threw back his head. "Nonsense, nonsense!"

"I taxed her with it, and, though she denied it, of course, I could see that it was true. And she is a young girl, an orphan, almost a child; and you are a married man. I loved her, sir, and we were engaged, two years ago, before she came to London; but, after six months, she broke it off. She doesn't care for me now—I've no hopes that way—but I love her, and, at least, want to prevent her from ruining her life."

Mr. Cassadine wrinkled his brow. "You are surely mistaken!" he said. "I need scarcely tell you that never for a moment has anything of the sort passed between us. I am not that kind of man. Your cousin has been as sacred to me as my own sister. I have lived like other men, of course,

but I don't prey on the innocent. I am very fond of her—but, dear me, I have always looked on her as a child!"

"She is twenty, sir."

"Yes; one forgets that. You believe what I tell you?"

"I believe every word, sir!" said Walter, heartily. "I only wanted to let you know."

"And you have been right, perfectly right. Your cousin loves her art, you see; she is good enough to admire my work, and may, perhaps, have identified the man with the painter. It is a contingency, I confess, that had never occurred to me. I shall not call here again—at least, not for a considerable time. But this would have been the case, in any event, as I am going abroad."

"I am ever so grateful to you, sir, and I hope you will not resent——"

"Not in the least, not in the least!" Mr. Cassadine rose, and held out his hand, which Walter grasped, cordially. "I am glad my little friend has a protector—young women are better not left too much to themselves. And I hope, with all my heart, that she may yet turn to you. Will you call her, please? I must have a word or two with her."

"I will send her in. Good-bye, Mr. Cassadine—and thank you!"

"Good-bye, my dear boy—good-bye!"

Walter went; he called to his cousin; the outer door closed on him.

Janet came into the room. She was flushed and excited; she glanced eagerly at Mr. Cassadine, and turned a deeper red.

"I don't know what nonsense he has been saying," she began; "but, good heavens, what will you think of me?"

"He has been saying very flattering things, my dear—and he's a rather fine fellow. I like him."

"Oh—he!" She tossed her head.

"Yes, I like him. He's honest and square; he's a man, and that's a good deal. What does he do?"

"Oh, his father has a factory—and he's a partner, or something. They're the usual sort of people with money.

And his great ambition is to sit on the County Council!"

"It's an ambition, like another—and better than most, perhaps, for, at least, it's not swamped by the personal element. You were engaged, you and he?"

"Ah, he has told you that? That's very noble, I must say! Yes, we were; but, thank heaven, I broke it off."

"Why?"

"Master, you ask me that? Marry a man without a grain of art in his soul?"

She had dropped into a low chair beside him, apparently, her accustomed seat, and he stroked her hair, and smiled rather sadly at her.

"Ah, my dear, my dear," he said, after a moment, "I have met so many young women of twenty! I can see the long procession of them—beginning when I was twenty myself, and that's nearly thirty years ago. And—don't be angry with me—most of them spoke just as you do now. Art was their fetich, their goddess, and I'm afraid they suffered for it in the end."

Janet drew herself slightly from him, and her voice showed how hurt she was. "Am I just like the others?" she asked.

"My child, you have a quite remarkable talent," replied Mr. Cassadine; "quite remarkable. I have told you that many times. But, then, you see, art is such a terrible business. I was at it for twenty years before I obtained, or, perhaps, even deserved, the least recognition. And think what those twenty years meant! In the country for eleven months out of the twelve, studying and working, working and studying, a slave to the wretched caprice of the weather, cut off from all fellowship, all society. My youth went—slipped by, unperceived—indeed, I had no youth; I was painting all the time. And my history is that of every man who has got on. In art, women have to meet men on their own ground, and the same technique is demanded of them, the same mastery. Are you prepared, little girl, to give up all, as I did?"

"If I could be assured of an achievement at the end of it—a tenth part as great as yours!"

He smiled, rather grimly. "I fear you overrate that achievement! In the Academy, perhaps, a half-dozen of us may seem to stand out; but set us beside a Corot, a Reynolds, a Gainsborough—to say nothing of Rembrandt or Velasquez—that puts us in our place! And as for you, you see, you are a woman, and a woman has physical limitations. Oh, I should think twice, if I were you, before I sacrificed my whole life!"

The girl rose, indignantly, to her feet. "This is something that he has been telling you! You have never before spoken like this to me! You have always encouraged me to work, persevere—you have always spoken of art as the greatest thing in the world!"

He wrinkled his brow. "So it is—or, at least, not entirely. The greatest thing in the world is love."

She flashed a quick glance at him, and dropped to her seat again.

"The greatest thing in the world is love," Mr. Cassadine repeated, as though he were speaking to himself. "Wife and children, husband and children—that is the goal that nature established, and they are great fools who try to pass it by. Ah, one is wiser at fifty than at twenty! The greatest thing in the world is love—but it is the simple love—the love of the honest man."

Janet said nothing, but looked fixedly at him.

"See," he said; "I married rather late in life—I was always so poor!—I married a brilliant woman. It was her brilliance that dazzled me—she was so amazingly clever. There is literally nothing she cannot do—she has all the talents. And I don't suppose any man has ever led a more miserable life than I."

He was again unconsciously stroking her hair, and she nestled closer to him.

"I have never spoken to you about my wife," he went on, "and I feel somewhat disloyal at doing so, now. But—

I shall want you to stand up for me, sometimes, perhaps, and it bears on what we were saying. She has no feeling, not one particle of feeling. Her cleverness, her talent, is like the glare of the sun upon an iceberg. She has not a single human emotion—or, at least, not for me—not one atom of sympathy. She inflicts pain as naturally as she breathes, and as unintentionally. She is a good woman, according to her lights; she has never done anything that the world could call wrong; but she does not love me, she cannot feel for me, and I have known the great loneliness of life. Oh, believe me, there is nothing more terrible than loneliness!"

He lowered his head, and stared dreamily at the ground. The girl breathed quickly, and leaned her head against him.

"There is no solitude more awful," he went on, "than the solitude of two. God made man and woman to love each other; and, when they do not love, their companionship is awful. One's eyes wander around, and see tender, solicitous wives; and one is alone, always alone. Ah, well, that's how it is, you see! For some time past, the situation has been intolerable, too hard to be borne. So, my wife and I have determined to separate—and I set out for Italy to-day—and mean to stay there."

"What!" cried Janet, and she turned in her chair, and caught hold of both his hands; "what! you will leave me!"

Mr. Cassadine started, and flushed; he gently withdrew his hands, and walked to the other end of the room. "May I smoke?" he asked. The girl nodded. He took a cigarette from his case, struck a match, and puffed for a moment, in silence.

"Of course," he said, "I have drawn a partial picture. One always does. Wherever you find a jarring couple, you may be sure that there are wrongs on both sides. But, anyhow, I am tired—tired of the weariness of things. My son belongs to his mother—he has been trained, or has learned, to care



not at all for me. My house is always crowded with a set of tedious and uncongenial people, and I am sick of the fashionable folk who sit to me for their portraits. I am weary, too, of all the little jealousies and squabbles among my own brethren; I sigh for a freer air. My wife has money of her own; if not enough to live in our present style, at least, sufficient for comfort, and even affluence. And, as for me, I want so little, and out there, shall want still less! So, I have packed up a case or two of books and pictures—it is extraordinary into how small a compass a man's real belongings go!—and I take my paint-box, and I begin life again”—he laughed—“in Italy, at fifty!”

Janet was trembling. “And when will you come back?”

Mr. Cassadine puffed at his cigarette before replying. “Who knows?” he said.

The girl hid her face in her hands; he glanced at her, and puffed rings of smoke in the air.

“You have lived in Paris,” he went on, “and you are familiar with that wonderfully expressive French word for a failure—‘*un raté*.’ I am a ‘*raté*.’ I began to paint when I was a child—I have painted for thirty-five years—and there are a dozen or so of my pictures in museums and galleries, and another two or three dozen that people have bought, and, some day, will come to the hammer. And this is my achievement; for this I have given my life! I am a failure, because my home life is a failure; and that is the only thing that counts, as far as one's happiness is concerned—and, after all, what else does one live for? You love art, and you are very young, and think me a great artist, and imagine that should atone for all. Were I what you believe me to be, my heart would still be empty, and hungry. But, indeed, I know well enough that I am only one of the links in the chain that will produce the real great artist of the future—I can think of these things now without bitterness—but it has not always been so. A man is happy till he truly realizes

his limitations—then, he becomes wise.”

He had evidently been speaking on with the intention of giving the girl time to recover herself; but Janet did not stir, or raise her head.

“I am going to Assisi,” he said. “I passed through the dear old town two years ago, and it has fascinated me ever since. No tourists, no resident English—one is back in the middle ages, and there is great calm, and peace. When a man belongs to the past, he does well to go to a place where all is tranquil, and a little melancholy. There, I hope to spend the rest of my days.”

She suddenly leaped to her feet. “Take me with you!” she cried.

“Janet!”

He had let his cigarette fall, and stared wildly at her. She went to him, ran across the room, and flung her arms around him.

“Take me with you! I love you!” And she hid her head on his shoulder, while her hands tightened around his neck. “I don't care! I don't care! I love you! And, since you are free, and going away, why not let me go with you? I know you are fond of me!”

For a moment, passion held him. “Yes, I am fond of you,” he murmured, hoarsely. “I—” And then he broke from her, almost roughly, and threw himself into a chair. “Come here, come here,” he said. “No—sit on that chair, facing me.” She obeyed, and sat down, her eyes still shining upon him.

“Janet, Janet,” he began; “oh, my dear child, how mad this is! You don't know what love means!”

“Do I not?” she asked, triumphantly; “do I not know? You are fifty, and I am twenty, and I offer you all my life. You are married, and could never marry me; you will probably die before me, and leave me alone; people will avoid me, and despise me—what do I care! I would suffer a million times as much, for you. I love you—don't you know that? I am only a girl—do you think girls

can't love? Look at me, look at me!"

He shook his head. "Ah, Janet—" he began, but she stopped him.

"There is nothing that you can tell me," she said, almost gaily, "that will alter me in the least. If you didn't care for me, of course—but you do, you do! Master, you shall never be lonely again, while I live! The sympathy, and the affection, the love—they shall all be yours! Oh, there shall be happiness still for us two—yes, there shall!" And she rose, with glad eyes, her arms stretched out before her; but he suddenly sprang to his feet, seized her violently by the wrists, and forced her back into her chair.

"Sit down!" he cried, harshly, "sit down! Don't speak another word! Be silent, I tell you!" He passed to the open window; pulled out his case, and lighted another cigarette, muttering to himself.

"Your cousin is not wrong," he said, sternly; "it is not good for you to live alone."

Her head drooped, and the blood rushed to her face.

"Dear God!" he went on, as he paced up and down the room; "my life has been wretched enough, but I've had the consolation, at least, that I haven't done very much harm. And now, at the end of it, shall I carry you off—you, a young girl—and take you with me to Italy?" He turned fiercely on her. "What right have you to put such a thought before me—such a horrible temptation in my way?"

She sobbed. "I love you!" she cried; "love you! love you!"

He paused in his walk, came to her, took both her hands. Her tears had softened him, he looked tenderly at her. "Oh, you dear little fool!" he said. "Let us thank God for both our sakes that there is some self-respect left in this battered old body of mine! Ouf!" He drew a long, deep breath. "My child, the Recording Angel shall blot out all my sins for this! Listen to me, now,

and do you say not a word more. Fond of you! How should I not be? The hours that I have spent here, in the last six months, have been the only happy ones I have known, and I would give half the years I have left to live the other half at Assisi, with you. But"—he noticed the glad light leaping into her eyes—"there's this little drawback—that, the day we arrived together, I should probably blow out my brains, for I should consider myself quite too contemptible to live. So, that's all done with! You may remember, though—for I'm going to scold you fearfully now—that I shall never forget you—or this hour."

"Don't scold me," she murmured, "don't scold me. If you will not, you will not—but my life is ended."

"Beginning, dear child!" he said, as he smiled on her; "beginning! Ah, you will find that out soon enough—there I have no fear. But, tell me, who is it has taught you this scorn of conventions? The world is wiser than we—the wisdom of many is greater than the wisdom of one. Janet, Janet, do you truly love me?"

"If I love you!" she cried, and threw up her hands.

"If you do, indeed, love me, then you must do what I tell you. You must give up the life you are leading, the kind of savage existence, that brings you in contact only with the disinherited of the world. You will go and live with your people—with your relations."

"Master!"

"You will do this for me, if you love me."

He pressed her hands, and looked into her eyes; and, after an instant, she answered, "Yes."

"Ah," he said, gladly, "then I won't scold any more. You've often told me how eager they were to have you; and, if they know nothing about art, they are still worthy people, who love you. And, Janet, I shall send you my address in Assisi, and you will write to me—and you will know that, while I live, you have no more

faithful and devoted friend. And, now, dear child—"he drew her toward him, and looked wistfully at her—"my own dear little girl—good-bye!"

He bent forward, and kissed her on the brow; then, motioning her to stay where she was, he left the room, closed the door, and hurried out of the studio.



## A PROFESSIONAL

A QUARREL is deplorable,  
And yet not wholly so,  
For Della is adorable  
When "making up," you know.

And so I play my part with her;  
I like to see her rage,  
For making up's an art with her—  
She learned it on the stage!

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



## A QUESTION OF STANDING

PATIENT—Are you sure I can stand this operation?  
DOCTOR—Why, your rating in Bradstreet is correct, isn't it?



## THE UNDIVINE COMEDY

### PARADISE

A SHADED room,  
An open fire,  
A cozy nook,  
And your heart's desire.

### PURGATORY

The selfsame room,  
With lights a-few;  
The selfsame nook,  
With ma there, too.

### INFERNO

The room, the shade,  
The nook, the fire,  
The blessed chance  
And enter sire!

E. P. H.

## THE ULTIMATE ACT OF LYMAN ODAFFER

TOGETHER WITH THE APPROPRIATE COMMENT OF THE CORONER'S JURY THEREON

"NOW, for instance, there was the case of Lyman Odaffer," said the loquacious landlord of the Pettyville tavern. "He had nine children and the asthma, four sons and five daughters, and could hardly sleep at night, in consequence.

"He was pretty well to do, financially, and had a big house, and all that; and all his sons married girls with elocutionary, or musical, or executive ability, and fetched them home to live; and all his daughters wedded talented men, of one sort or another, and brought them home for him to support. One was a horse-doctor and a piano-tuner, another was poetical and had spells, the third was a natural-born bone-setter, and a chronic and perpetual chair-setter; and so on through the list; and every one of them was too intellectual, or something of the kind, to work, and each of them felt himself entitled to be called "professor," and contemptuously denied the right of all the rest to that honor.

"Even this far along, you can see that Odaffer had plenty of material for a gaudy time of it, with those professors all contending for their rights, and the daughters-in-law practising their several specialties, and their husbands and wives taking sides, and nobody unanimous on anything except eating—but all of them mighty able at that. And then, in due time, sundry grandchildren appeared on the scene, with two pairs of twins among them, and one bunch of triplets, and debates arose as to whom they took their eyes and noses and talents from; and there were names to be selected, and one child won a first prize at a baby show, and three of them had their little pictures in the papers, for surviving three different brands of infant food; and, all the time along, Odaffer had to keep building on rooms and ells and additions, to accommodate the rush; and his asthma kept getting worse and worse, till he couldn't lie down at all, and took to going down-town and dozing standing up; till, one day, a stranger put the hitch-strap of a nervous horse into his hand, with a request that he hold the animal just for a minute, and something scared the horse, and it ran away; and poor Odaffer was so sleepy he couldn't let go, and was strewed down the street for about three blocks, and—well, anyhow, he went right home and up garret, and calmly and deliberately took down several bags of dried sage and liver-wort from a rafter, and hung himself in their place.

"The coroner's jury scratched their heads, and brought in a verdict of justifiable suicide; and nobody never denied it. That's the whole story, except that I forgot to say that his middle initial was 'J.'"

TOM P. MORGAN.



## EASILY THE SLOWEST

BIBBS—What's the slowest thing you ever saw?  
GIBBS—Two messenger boys playing chess.

## TWO ODES OF HAFIZ

By Elsa Barker

### I

SAKI, I pray you give me wine—red wine—  
To ease the burden of this heart of mine!

I did not dream when love first came to me  
How terrible, how bitter, it could be!

The night wind brought a perfume on the air,  
Musky and sweet, from my Belovèd's hair;

Then, blew it all away. 'Twas very brief  
To give my heart this heaviness of grief.

When I besought the Magian for a sign,  
He bade me stain my prayer-mat red with wine.

So, Saki, to the Tavern let us go,  
Because he is a lover, and must know.

'Tis strange, at every stage along the road,  
As soon as I have eased me of my load,

I hear the jangling camel-bell's refrain,  
Bidding me bind my burden on again.

I envy them upon the other shore!  
Those happy ones will suffer nevermore

The wave of pain, the night of mortal breath,  
The terrifying whirlpool that is death.

But, for my grief, I only am to blame;  
I followed fancy at the cost of fame.

And yet 'tis strange that not a soul can teach  
This mystery of love of which they preach!

If the Belovèd Presence lure thy soul,  
O HAFIZ, be not absent from that goal!

When thou art past the threshold—on that day—  
Throw all the treasure of the world away!

### II

Belovèd, the moon's beauty, lighting space,  
Is borrowed from Thy love-illumined face!



## THE SMART SET

And all the luster she seems swimming in,  
From the entrancing dimple in Thy chin!

O Thou, who hast in fee the soul of me,  
It lies upon my lips, and cries to thee.

Whether to come or go, it waits a sign  
From Thee, to know Thy will, and make it mine.

And when Thou passest by me—if Thou must!—  
I pray keep far Thy skirt from blood and dust,

For on this Path has fallen many a one,  
A bleeding sacrifice by Thee undone.

Alone, my heart works ruin all the day.  
Saki, plead with my Heart-Possessor, pray!

For, trust in thee so absolute is mine,  
I swear by my soul and that soul of thine.

O Thou Belovèd! From Thine eyes' soft fire,  
No formal ones obtain their soul's desire.

Propriety's torn veil, oh, let them sell  
To us love-drunken ones, who know Thee well!

My mortal life, that I have stained with sleep,  
I will make vigilant, and watch, and weep;

For every tear-drop on mine upturned eye  
Reflects Thy face, and seems to bring Thee nigh.

Oh, let the wind blow from Thy lovely cheek  
A handful of the roses that I seek!

I would perceive the perfume that is shed  
E'en from the dust of Thy rose-garden bed!

Saki, who sittest at the banquet-board  
Of great Jemshid, long mayst thou pledge thy lord!

Although my cup is empty of the wine  
That circles in that seven-ringed cup of thine.

And, though from mortal nearness we are far,  
Nearer, O friend, in our desires we are;

For I am slave of Thy great Sultan, too,  
And offer prayers and praises that are due.

Sultan of Sultans! Thou of mighty star!  
Give me one blessing now, and, near or far,

I, humbly, like the sky, will kiss the dust  
Of Thy transcendent Court in praise and trust.

This is the prayer of HAFIZ:—Listen, then,  
Indulgent Sultan! Say a kind Amen!—

"Give me for food—and take all else away—  
The lips of my Belovèd, night and day!"

# THE GALLANTRY OF MR. JIMMY ROGERS

By Justus Miles Forman

JIMMY ROGERS went to the Aberthenays' house-party, up in Connecticut, partly because he had, at the time, nothing else to do, and partly because his sister, who wished to be there for reasons of her own, pleaded with him about it, and extorted a very unwilling promise. He dined at Martin's with some other men, the evening before he went up, and was very bitter about sisters who used you for the furtherance of their own selfish designs, and about February house-parties in general.

"It always rains," he said, morosely. "You never saw a house-party in February when it didn't rain every day. And there's nothing to do but paddle about in the wet, or stop indoors and quarrel over a pool-table."

The other men pointed out to him that you could always play golf, and that weather made no difference about that; but Jimmy Rogers shook his head, sadly, and answered that he was no proper golf-player at all.

"I don't even speak the language," said he, "and my score is scandalous. Every time I come back here to America, you chaps annoy me about golf. I wish you'd look up a rational game. No, you can't make me feel any better about that house-party. I look forward to a week-end of gloom. And I'm certain," he added, querulously, "that something very unpleasant is going to happen to me, up there. I've felt it coming for some days. I expect I shall catch pneumonia from limping about a wet golf-course, and die. You mark my words, something unpleasant is going to happen to me. No, not rye; Scotch."

He went up to Connecticut the next afternoon—a Friday. He had made some excuse for cutting off the first two days of the affair, and so reducing it to a mere week-end; but he was still rather low in his mind over the whole thing, and haunted by a strange premonition that something unpleasant was going to happen.

He was further annoyed by having to take a very local train from New Haven, which paused wearily at every station along the way, and, as Jimmy Rogers said afterward to his hostess, if there wasn't a station, waited while one was built.

Gerald Livingstone, whose presence at the Aberthenays was due to reasons somewhat similar and related to those of Jimmy Rogers's sister, Jessica, met him at the station with a trap.

"Thank the Lord, you've come at last!" said he. "This party thing is awful. We'll be at each others' throats in another day or two, if nothing turns up to amuse us. It's the most picturesquely ill-assorted lot of people I ever saw. Hope you'll cheer things up a bit."

"Well, I just won't," said Jimmy Rogers, irritably. "And I'd like to know," he demanded, "what people mean by asking people to come and be shut up in a cage with a lot of other people they don't want to be shut up with? It's a blessed poor lark. Haven't you made any plans for the next two or three days? Because, if you haven't, I'll jolly well turn around and go home. I didn't want to come, anyhow."

"Well," said Mr. Livingstone, with an air of consideration, "we had thought of one or two schemes—pro-

vided you are willing to help, that is. But, of course, they may not be a success."

Jimmy Rogers made several remarks which would be barred from the United States mails.

"Who's here?" he inquired, after an exhausted silence.

"There's Jessica," said Mr. Livingstone. "She came Wednesday. I don't know what I'd—we'd do without Jessica," he reflected, sentimentally. Jimmy Rogers growled.

"And there's that little Sanderson girl," Livingstone went on, "and her fiancé, a decent-enough sort called Greenbrough—rather an ass. And then there's one of the Morrisons, the elder one. You'll remember him slightly. He was at Andover with us years ago. Went wrong after—Princeton, I believe."

Mr. Livingstone flicked at the horse's neck with his whip, and frowned out over the bare hills.

"There is something cursedly queer about that trio," he said, presently. "I can't make 'em out. The little Sanderson girl seems keen enough on Greenbrough, I should say; but she's about with that Morrison chap more than I'd like any fiancée of mine to be. And yet—I don't believe she likes him, either. It looks to me as if she were afraid of him. Her eyes are scared when she looks at him. It's cursedly queer."

"Oh, you ought to write books!" said Jimmy Rogers, insultingly. "You're always finding something romantic where there's no romance at all. You make me ill."

But Mr. Livingstone nodded an argumentative head.

"It's all very well for you to sneer," said he. "You couldn't get on without sneering; but just wait till you've had a chance to see those three young people together. I tell you, there's something peculiar, somewhere." Then, he looked off over the bare hills again, and seemed struggling with some emotion.

"Who else is here?" demanded Jimmy Rogers, as one who changes

a subject which has come to bore him.

"Oh, the Carters," said Livingstone, "and a painter chap from London, and some middle-aged frumps who never appear except at meals, and never speak then; and a man who is discovering or inventing some particularly vicious microbe. It's a remnant sale—sort of. But I want you to watch Sara Sanderson—oh, I forgot to tell you that Alison Cartwright is here, too. That'll cheer you up, I expect."

It did somewhat cheer him up, for he had, at one period, been used to consume large quantities of that young woman's tea in the avenue de l'Observatoire, and had thought well of her hair and eyes.

He had a very pleasant quarter of an hour with her when the party assembled for dinner, toward eight o'clock; but they made him take out one of the daughters of the house, whom he disliked, and, to his very great annoyance, put Miss Cartwright at the extreme other end of the table.

At his left, he found the little Sanderson girl—she was not at all little, but being pink and blonde, and of the appealing type, was so called—with her fiancé just beyond her, and the *tertium quid*, of whom Gerald Livingstone had spoken, directly across.

Jimmy Rogers gave a regretful glance down toward the other end of the table, and made a series of remarks—unrepeatable—under his breath. He considered himself let in for a very stupid hour or two, for, as has been said, he disliked Miss Aberthenay, and he had no hope of finding any entertainment at his left. It had been his experience that girls in the engagement stage were utterly unfit for human intercourse. It was only after matrimony that they began again to sit up and take an interest in other men.

He was, accordingly, much surprised when Miss Sanderson turned almost at once toward him with a very badly concealed eagerness, and began to remind him of what excellent friends they had been, several years before,

and of what fun they had had on a certain trip from Paris to Robinson with the Carol Cartwrights. She hardly so much as threw a word to the placid young man at her other side, and, as Miss Aberthenay, on Jimmy Rogers's right, appeared quite satisfied with the charms of her further neighbor, there was no possibility of escape.

Jimmy Rogers could not at all make the situation out. It seemed to him that the girl was attempting to be cheaply flirtatious, presumably with some ulterior motive, and, as he did not care for that sort of thing, he favored her with a disapproving scowl, and with brief replies in which there was a marked absence of enthusiasm. But, happening once to raise his eyes, he intercepted a glance from the *tertium quid* across the table, directed toward Miss Sanderson, which made him halt in the midst of a sentence. He looked from Morrison's face, a little down the table to where Gerald Livingstone sat, and that young man's eye held a certain intensity of significance. Jimmy Rogers turned to the girl beside him.

"Yes," said he, easily, "yes, that was a very good lark—no end of fun. And I think it is most unpleasant of you to go and get yourself married so that we can't have any more of them. Every one I know," he complained, bitterly, "is either married or considering it. There are at least a dozen wretched little brats who've been taught to call me, 'Uncle Jimmy.' I feel at least fifty." And, meanwhile, he was watching the girl's face with a great deal of care, and he saw that what he had thought a tendency toward flirtation was nothing of the sort, but that she was exceedingly nervous and very much agitated about something, and that she was making a sort of desperate appeal to him for relief.

Once or twice, the man across the table spoke to her, and then Jimmy Rogers saw that her fingers strained at the table's edge, and that her breathing came quicker. Also, her

eyes seemed to widen, but they would not meet Mr. Morrison's gaze.

"She's frightened!" said Jimmy Rogers to himself. "That black-guard over there is frightening her. Jerry was right. Now, what can the chap be frightening her about, I wonder? And why the devil doesn't she go to her fiancé, and have him wring the other chap's neck?"

When the women had gone out, and the men were settling down in groups about the table, Jimmy Rogers moved up beside young Greenbrough, Miss Sanderson's fiancé, and beckoned Gerald Livingstone across.

"I've had no chance yet to congratulate you," he said, to young Greenbrough. "You're a very lucky chap. I dare say you'd thought that out yourself, though. I used to know Miss Sanderson very well. We played about with the same people. And I consider it very unkind of her not to have married me."

Young Greenbrough laughed and colored a little, boyishly. He was an absurdly young-looking man, too much of Miss Sanderson's own type, blond and pink and a bit vacuous.

"I'm sure you're very—very good, you know, and all that," he said. "Yes, I am lucky, ain't I? Hope you'll help us pull the thing off in the Spring. Very jolly for Sara, having one of her old friends turn up." He twisted about in his chair, and frowned with much the preoccupation of an anxious Cupid.

"She's been a bit—a bit low in her mind, of late," he said. "Maybe, you can buck her up. I don't know what's the matter—worrying over something, I expect. Girls are such an odd lot!"

Jimmy Rogers caught Gerald Livingstone's eye, and looked quickly away. His glance fell across the table where Morrison sat, a little apart from a noisy group, lowering over a rather liberal whiskey-and-soda in place of coffee. He bore the elaborately unconcerned air of one who has been watching something, and has been nearly caught at it.

Jimmy Rogers turned back to the other men, and began to talk about the scratch drag-hunt the host was trying to get up.

Later, in the drawing-room, he found Miss Sanderson in a far corner, turning over some sheet music which lay upon a little table. He waited for a moment, to allow Greenbrough to seize the opportunity, if he wished, but, upon seeing that young man make at once for another side of the room, he cut neatly in ahead of the expectant Morrison, and joined her.

The girl dropped her hands beside her with a little sigh that sounded like relief.

"Oh, thank you!" she said, in a low tone; "thank you!" Her voice was the least bit unsteady.

"I didn't want to be left—left alone," she said. Jimmy Rogers frowned anxiously down into her face, but she would not meet his eyes. "My future lord and master seemed more interested in some one else than in me, didn't he?" she said. "He's gone over there where Alison Cartwright and the Carters are sitting."

"There is a funny little alcove just beyond this corner," said Jimmy Rogers. "It has plants and things in it, like a little Winter-garden. And it has a seat, too. Come and tell me what you've been doing for the last three years. I congratulated your Greenbrough person a few minutes ago, but I'm not sure that I wouldn't rather have put poison in his coffee. How do you know I didn't want to marry you, myself? Just think what you may have missed."

They went along the room to the little alcove, with its draped portières and its palms and roses, and found a very comfortable seat there, where they could see the big room before them, but were quite hidden themselves. And then Jimmy Rogers fell awkwardly silent, not knowing how he should begin what he wished to say; for, after all, though he had known the girl rather well at one time, they were,

since three years past, quite strangers; and, it is indubitably an embarrassing, not to say hazardous, thing, to ask another man's fiancée how it happens that a third man is badly frightening her, and to offer your services in the matter of effacing the third man. It seems so patently the fiancé's province!

"Who is this Morrison chap?" asked Jimmy Rogers, at last; "chap who sat across table from us at dinner. Jerry said something about my remembering him, but I don't, at all. I don't like his look very much—surly sort of beggar! Know him well?" He had been so considerate as to fasten his eyes upon a fixed point in the middle distance, but he heard the girl stir in her seat beside him, and he heard her catch her breath, sharply.

"Yes," she said, after a little wait, "yes, I—know him." She made as if she would go on, but halted, stammering, and so fell into another silence, and Jimmy Rogers was silent, too, trying very busily to think of some other way of approaching the thing.

"I wish you'd tell me," he said, at last, irritably.

But the girl held up one hand. "Somebody's going to sing," she said.

The chatter of many voices ceased brokenly from the corners of the big drawing-room, and some one struck a preliminary chord on the piano. Jimmy Rogers peered through the palm leaves which spread before the little alcove, screening it.

"It's that young German woman with the red hair and the sulky mouth," he said. "And I've a notion that she can sing, too. She plays those chords as if she meant them."

She *could* sing. She was a little woman, dull-eyed, narrow-shouldered, thin-chested, but she sat at ease before the piano across the room, staring absently at the wall, and played the half-dozen introductory chords of the "Solvejg's Lied" out of Grieg's "Peer Gynt." And she opened her mouth, and there came out from the thin little chest a great quivering volume of song, contralto, deep-pitched, that filled the huge room, beating at the



windows for exit, as a man's voice might have done—Plançon's, Edouard de Reszké's!

*"Der Winter mag scheiden, der Frühling vergehn—der Frühling vergehn!"*

There is no more beautiful song in the world. It breathes of sunshine and green meadows under snow-peaks, alien northern seas, and northern love that is constant. No, there is no more strangely beautiful song in the world.

When the song was done, some one attempted to applaud, but faltered and stopped, for one does not applaud such music as that with silly beatings of the palms. And the little German woman, looking stolidly at the wall, crossed one knee over the other, and, sitting so before the piano, touching it in an absent-minded fashion, sang, still with that wonderful volume of voice, unbelievable from such a poor little body, shaking for its very hugeness, thrilling beyond words, the "Norwegian Song" of Logé; and, after that, two strange, wild *volk-lieder*, which no one knew, and at which every one wanted to weep.

Then, when she had risen abruptly from the piano, and had moved away, and when the little knots of people scattered about the room had begun again to talk, Jimmy Rogers looked once more at the girl by his side. But the girl had turned partly away from him, and had thrown her arms out over the heap of pillows at the other end of the seat, and, with her face upon her arms, was sobbing very quietly and bitterly.

He realized at once that her already overstrained nerves had given way under the music, and he realized, also, that, if he was to discover what was the difficulty in which she and Morrison were concerned, and how it might be met, he would never have a better chance than now. He waited a few moments till the girl seemed the least bit calmer, and laid his hand upon her arm.

"Look here a moment, Sara," said he, very gently; "that Morrison bounder is annoying you, somehow,

frightening you. I couldn't help seeing it at dinner, and afterward. Now, of course, I don't know what is the trouble; and, equally of course, it is none of my affair. Your troubles are your own, and, if anything could be done by any one else, of course, Greenbrough has the first right. Still—well, we used to be very good pals, and it makes me—I didn't like to see you frightened. Can a chap do anything? I'll kill the blackguard, if you say the word, you know. Eh, what?"

The girl sat up among the cushions, and turned her wet eyes upon Jimmy Rogers. They were very wide and startled, and he thought there was a certain eager, hopeful gleam in them.

"Oh, if you *could* do something!" she cried, very low. And, at the tone of her voice, Jimmy Rogers's heart, never famed for its hardness, quite melted within him, till he would gladly have wrung the neck of the objectionable Morrison—or of anybody else, for that matter. "If only you could!" she cried, "for he is all you have called him, a bounder and a blackguard. He—has a—he has a certain hold on me, and he is determined to use it, the coward, to prevent my marrying Dicky Greenbrough. Oh, Jimmy, if only you could help me!"

"But, I don't see," objected Jimmy Rogers, in a puzzled tone, "I don't see why you don't have Greenbrough break the man's head. Surely, Greenbrough has the first right to pull you out of a scrape, to shield you from such blackguards as this Morrison man! Why don't you tell Greenbrough?"

"But I can't!" cried the girl, miserably, and her breath caught again in sobs. "Dicky is the very last man I could tell. He must never know anything about it—oh, can't you see?"

"Ah!" said Jimmy Rogers, slowly.

"Listen!" she cried, very low, and he felt her hand shaking upon his arm; "listen! I've been engaged to Dicky for nearly a year. He's the dearest boy in all the world, and I—I love him more than—oh, I can't tell about that. Well, I was stopping up at the Trevor-Stoughtons last November, and Dicky

wasn't there. This — this Morrison was, though, and he — and I — well, I liked him. He's been about a lot, and he's known no end of people and things. I suppose he — I suppose he turned my silly little head for a while. No, wait, wait! Don't you suppose I know how contemptible it was? You may call me names, later on. I — wrote some letters to him after I left, a dozen of them. They — they — were indiscreet, I suppose. I — lost my head, badly. Don't look at me that way! Any girl may lose her head at times, if she's a fool. They'd never do for Dicky to see, those letters. Dicky is the soul of honor. He'd never understand; he doesn't know enough about women to understand. If he should see those letters, everything would be — off. I tell you, he mustn't see them! he *mustn't!* I love him honestly and well. I swear to you, Jimmy, that I love him. And I'll make him a good wife. Can't you see how I might have been a fool — for a week? And now that — that brute has come here to try to break up my engagement. He has my letters, and he says he'll show them to Dicky if I don't break the engagement before we leave this house. He — wants to marry me, himself. Jimmy, Jimmy, can't you help me?"

Jimmy Rogers sat still for a little time, frowning and biting his lips.

"If I go into this," said he, presently, "I want to know just what I'm going into." He turned and looked into the girl's face, and his eyes were steady and somewhat hard. "How — how much of a fool were you, for a week?" he asked. "How foolish are these letters that Morrison is holding over you?"

But the girl stared up into his eyes, and shook her head uncomprehendingly. "I don't know what you mean," she said, in a puzzled tone. "How foolish are they? As foolish as the love-letters of any girl, I expect. I expect they're much the ordinary sort of love-letter. Heavens, it isn't that! You don't seem to comprehend. *I was engaged to Dicky all this time!* Don't you see how it will look to him? Don't

you see that he'd never trust me again, if he knew? I was mad, but I'm sane now, and I've had a lesson. I know that Dicky's good, clean — well, dullness, if you like — is worth more than all the cleverness of such cads as that — person. You'll help me, Jimmy? you'll help me?"

Jimmy Rogers smiled cheerfully down into her drawn face, and nodded.

"Oh, yes, I'll help you," said he. "I'll get the letters for you. Dicky Greenbrough shall never know that you've been such a particularly silly little fool. Oh, I say, you don't mind if I tell Jerry something about it, do you? I shall need him, I expect."

"No," said the girl, and, with the relief, her sobbing threatened to return; "no, I don't mind your telling Mr. Livingstone. Anything to get the letters — anything that Dicky sha'n't find out. Ah, how can a girl be such a fool!"

Then, after a pause, during which Jimmy Rogers sat quite silent, frowning and chafing his hands together softly, "How are you going to get them away from him?" she asked.

"Go to his room, and demand 'em," said Jimmy Rogers, grimly. "Beat the face off him if he refuses; or hold a gun on him."

But the girl caught at his arm in a sudden panic. "Ah, no, no!" she cried. "No, you don't know him. You mustn't do that! He'd never give them up. He'd let you kill him first. He'd let you beat him half to death, and then he'd tell every one in the house why you had done it. Ah, you don't know him! No, that would never do. You must get them when he doesn't know. You must — must — steal them, Jimmy. No other way would do."

Jimmy Rogers looked up with a certain gleam in his eye.

"I'm not quite in the habit of stealing things of any nature," said he, stiffly. "I'm afraid, Sara, that, if I go in for this at all, you must let me do it as I choose. I promise you the letters, if they're in the house — and Dicky sha'n't know. That's enough, isn't it?"

The girl shook her head, clinging still to his arm, and her eyes were wide and frightened.

"I tell you!" she cried, anxiously, "it cannot be done in that way. He's no coward, even if he is a blackguard. You couldn't frighten him. You'd have to hurt him badly, and how could you explain that to the other people? If the letters are taken from him by force, he'll make a row about it, and tell every one. I know him. He's low enough for that. Even if he could not prove his tale, the mischief still would have been done. Oh, Jimmy, Jimmy, you *must* steal them!"

Jimmy Rogers gave an exasperated growl, and returned to silence; nevertheless, he was thinking that there might be a great deal in what the girl said. If the letters were taken from Morrison, and Morrison should turn nasty about it—make a row—the whole thing would only have been made worse.

Jimmy Rogers rose with a sigh, and shook his head.

"I was never cut out for a criminal," said he, plaintively. "I have an essentially honest and open nature. You'll be very sorry one day for starting me upon this sort of thing. I don't know yet how the trick is to be done, but I'll see what Jerry thinks. Anyhow, you shall have those letters."

"Ah, yes!" cried the girl, eagerly. "Do what Mr. Livingstone thinks best. Ask Mr. Livingstone about it."

Jimmy Rogers turned a somewhat resentful eye upon her.

"You seem to have a great deal of confidence in Jerry Livingstone," he said. "I wonder you didn't apply to him in the first place. Come, we must get out of here. We've been hidden too long, already. Dicky Greenbrough will be looking for you."

Just outside the little alcove, they ran upon Morrison, who favored them with a melodramatic and suspicious frown; but Jimmy Rogers met the other man's eyes with a politely indifferent inquiry, and moved on to join a near-by group, from which he, at last, succeeded in detaching Miss Ali-

son Cartwright, and bore that young woman, with a sigh of satisfaction, to the most distant and secluded corner in the room.

"Ah, now, this is something like!" said he, as he dropped down beside her on the divan. "You've got to be excessively nice to me for at least an hour. I've earned it—I really have."

But Miss Cartwright seemed, for some reason, rather cold and preoccupied and distraite, a condition which Jimmy Rogers was so uncharitable as to ascribe to very unworthy motives.

"Oh, very well," said he, disgustedly, at the end of a painful half-hour, "I'll let you go. I've not the heart to annoy you any longer, but I'd like to say that you're a great disappointment to me. I don't think I like you any more. If you should ask me, I suspect you of being a cat—like every other woman," he added, gloomily.

Miss Cartwright laughed for a moment as they rose. That speech had been so very like Jimmy Rogers! But she looked at him with eyes that seemed a bit troubled. "It's—it's none of my affair, Jimmy," she said, "but I wish you—well, don't you go doing anything foolish. I—can't say much about it, but—be careful—you may, one day, wish you had been."

Jimmy Rogers frowned at her, perplexedly.

"I wonder what you're driving at," said he.

An hour later, when the women had gone up-stairs, and the men were loafing about in the billiard-room, Jimmy Rogers signaled Livingstone, and moved over to where the gloom-enfolded Morrison sat talking to one of the Aberthenay sons. The latter was just finishing a thrilling tale of somewhat questionable gallantry, and bore that air of devilish recklessness affected by the extremely young.

"Of course, it was rather nasty; but, then, all's fair in love, you know," he added, originally. "Isn't that so?" he demanded of Jimmy Rogers.

"It is not," said Jimmy Rogers.

"And, when you grow up, you'll know it, too. But you've a lot of time yet." He dodged a carefully directed stream from a siphon, and poured himself a measure of yellow liquid from a convenient bottle.

"You make me think," said he, catching Gerald Livingstone's eye, "of a chap I ran into a few months ago. He held your cheerful and easy views as to the fairness of everything in love. They got him into trouble."

"How was that?" asked Gerald Livingstone, helpfully.

"Why, you see," said Jimmy Rogers, "the bounder had a—had a sort of hold upon a girl who was engaged to another man, and, because he wanted to marry the girl himself, he was ready to use his hold to break up the engagement."

"Ah!" cried the Aberthenay child. "Now, that is something like! That's real drama—melodrama. Did he use it?"

"No," said Jimmy Rogers, smiling gently at the man across from him, who happened to be Arthur Morrison; "no. You see, another chap took a hand in it—another chap who was a friend of the girl's. The bounder's hold was a packet of—of letters. The other chap took them away."

The man across the table leaned forward, watching Jimmy Rogers's face very keenly. A tinge of color had come into his cheeks.

"Took them away?" he asked. "How? how did he take them away?"

"Oh," said Jimmy Rogers, carelessly, "he held a gun on the blackguard, and frightened him into giving the letters up."

Morrison leaned back in his chair, laughing a little, and shaking his head.

"The first chap was a poor villain, then," he said. "He was easily frightened. Lord! he might have known the other chap would never shoot—that it was a bluff."

Jimmy Rogers concealed a yawn, and finished the whiskey in his long glass.

"There's where you mistake," said he, looking at his watch; "there's just where you mistake. The chap would have shot. Any proper chap would. It was a serious matter. Who wouldn't kill a blackguard of that type to save a girl? That's just what I should do if I were placed in a similar position. I should shoot. Meanwhile, I'm going to bed. It's nearly two o'clock. Coming up, Jerry?"

Up in Jimmy Rogers's room, Livingstone took his chum by the arm, and looked very curiously into his eyes.

"What is it all about?" he demanded. "What was that lie for? I saw you go off with Sara Sander-son this evening, and I know you're up to something, because you've got the look. What is it?"

"Just this," said Jimmy Rogers. "You were right about those three people, Sara and her lamb and Morrison. Morrison has some letters of hers that Greenbrough mustn't see—*mustn't*, do you understand? She's half mad over it. I'm going to get the letters, and you've got to help."

"Steal 'em!" said Mr. Livingstone, briefly.

Jimmy Rogers cursed. "I might know you'd say that," he growled, disgustedly. "Sara insists that I must steal them, too. I'm no porch-climber, blast you! I'd rather take them away from him like a man."

"Won't do," said Livingstone, shaking his head; "won't do, at all. He might row. You can't shoot him over a silly little packet of letters—after the style of your fairy-tale down-stairs, and, if you man-handle him, he'll tell. What in—what did you spin him that yarn for, anyhow?"

Jimmy Rogers threw his coat in a corner, and tramped gloomily up and down the room.

"Oh, I expected I'd have to steal the beastly things," he admitted, "and I wanted to throw him off the track, make him think I'd take the other course. I knew he suspected I was in the game when he saw me alone

with Sara. I'll have to steal 'em, I expect. Rotten game! You've got to help. We'll make plans to-morrow, and try to pull it off to-morrow night."

Mr. Livingstone nodded, thoughtfully.

"Right, oh!" said he. "Maybe it'll be a lark. Yes, we'll talk it over to-morrow. I'm off to bed. Night!"

But, once in his own room, he acted most strangely, for he sat down upon the edge of his bed, and, taking his head between his hands, rocked back and forth in paroxysms of apparent pain for nearly half an hour. And when, at last, he rose, his eyes were undeniably wet with tears.

Twenty-four hours later—or, to be quite accurate, twenty-six, for it was shortly before four of the morning—the two sat again in Jimmy Rogers's room, with the shades pulled down, and a very dim light burning. Jimmy Rogers was simply but chastely attired in rubber tennis-shoes, trousers, and a sweater turned inside out, so that the large white Y was hidden. The sweater becomingly set off his excellent shoulders. He had a very neat thing in black masks hanging by a cord from his neck, and a dark-lantern stood on the table beside him.

Mr. Livingstone's outfit, while, perhaps, less striking, was of an equal modesty in offering nothing by way of identification.

Jimmy Rogers made a little sketch on a bit of paper.

"The room is like this," said he. "I sneaked in there to-day, when I knew he wasn't about. I didn't dare stop more than a moment, for fear I'd be caught by a servant. There are two windows, here and here. There is a two-foot ledge running along the outside of the house, by which we can reach them. It's the third room from mine. The bed is in a little alcove, here, and beyond it his bags—the man has brought luggage enough for a month!—stand against the wall near the dressing-room door. Do you see? I've put just one safe dose of chloroform in the bottle, so that there can be no mistake. For heaven's sake,

don't spill any of it! You'll stand by the bed, watching him after he's fixed, and I'll go through the luggage. The keys will be on his chain. Bottle and handkerchief all right?"

"All right," said Livingstone; "in my jacket pocket. It's going to be a great lark. I expect we'd best be off, now."

They turned out the light, and Jimmy Rogers fastened the dark-lantern to his belt, with the shutter closed. Then, they put on their masks, and went to the open window, sliding the shade up out of their way.

It was a raw, windy night, with driving clouds, which now and then opened to a ray of pale moonlight. Occasionally, there was a dash of rain.

"Careful on this ledge," whispered Jimmy Rogers. "It's wet from the rain. Hold to the vines and shutters."

They made their way slowly and carefully along the narrow ledge. It seemed a very long time before they reached the fifth window. The rain beat one moment into their eyes, and the next a sudden flash of moonlight spied them out, flattened against the wall. They heard the wind in the trees, the barking of a dog very far away in the night; once, the whistle of a train. Then, Jimmy Rogers halted before a half-opened window, and crouched there, listening for a little time. There was no sound from within, and he slipped into the room with a silent neatness that would have done credit to a professional.

Livingstone was after him in an instant, and they stood, out of the pale light from the windows, hidden in the gloom, listening again. There was a sound of regular breathing from the little alcove beyond. Jimmy Rogers slid the shutter of his lantern, and turned the yellow beam of light upon the bed. In another instant, the two were beside it, and Livingstone was pouring the contents of the little bottle upon a folded handkerchief.

"Keep that light off his face!" he whispered. "Do you want to wake him up? I can see well enough." He bent forward, silently, and laid



the cloth over the sleeping man's mouth and nostrils.

There was a little catching of breath, a slight stir of the head from side to side; then, the long, deep stertorous respiration of one under anesthetic influence.

"Do you suppose that stuff's strong enough?" whispered Jimmy Rogers. "I can hardly smell it. It fairly reeked when I put it in the bottle this morning."

"Of course, it's strong enough," said Livingstone, impatiently. "Can't you hear the swine breathe? Get to your work. I'll watch."

Jimmy Rogers flashed his light about the room, and made for the dressing-table. The contents of Morrison's pockets—some bills, a few silver coins, a crumpled handkerchief, a tobacco-pouch, a card-case, and a bunch of keys lay spread over the table. He took the keys, and crossed the room to where the two large Gladstone bags stood against the wall. They were both open, for the convenience of the valet, but Jimmy Rogers knew that in one of them there would be another bag or box, within which would be locked the packet of letters.

For a moment, though, he paused and looked up.

"Feel under the pillows!" he whispered to Livingstone. "They may be there."

"Nothing but his watch," said Livingstone, after a moment. Then, Jimmy Rogers went neatly and expeditiously through the contents of the two Gladstone bags, and, from the second one, drew a small box of lacquered tin, such as are made for carrying valuable papers and the like. He found the proper key, a very small, flat one, and sprung open the lid.

Inside the box were several long, legal-seeming papers, folded and bound with tape. There were two or three loose letters with the imprint of legal or business houses in the corner of the envelope. There was a woman's glove—the short, fingerless glove worn at dinner by Viennese women—and there

was a miniature in a tarnished frame, and a little bunch of dried violets. But, underneath, at the very bottom of the box, there was a packet of letters, ten or twelve of them, bound together by an elastic band.

Jimmy Rogers gave a little, whispered exclamation, and caught the packet closer to the light. The address of the topmost letter was unmistakably in Sara Sanderson's sprawling hand. He closed the box, and locked it, and slipped it back into the Gladstone bag. He was even careful to remember that its place was under a pile of shirts. Then, he rose to his feet, laughing softly, and started across the room with the bunch of keys. But, midway, he stopped short, listening, and, in another moment, the slide of his lantern had shut with a click, and Jimmy Rogers was on his hands and knees beside the open window, swift and steady and alert.

There was a sound of running feet upon the gravel-drive below, and some one cried, "'Ere's the room, 'ere's the room! This one. H'i seen the dark-lantern a-flashing!" There were more running feet over the gravel, and, somewhere in the still house, a bell rang, and a voice called out.

Jimmy Rogers and Livingstone reached the door of the room together; but there came steps running in the corridor outside. A breathless voice shouted:

"This is the door! Come on, you fellows!" It was young Aberthenay's voice.

"The window!" said Livingstone, in Jimmy Rogers's ear. "It's the only chance. They may not see us on the ledge. The moon is under."

Jimmy Rogers slipped out of the open window, and felt for the ledge with his feet.

"Quick, man, quick!" whispered Livingstone. He found the ledge and began, unseen as yet, to make his way along it. But he had not gone three paces when his foot slipped on the wet stone, and he felt himself falling. He caught at the vines as he went, and they tore slowly from the wall under

his weight—tore, bit by bit, with a most atrocious amount of noise, till his feet touched the ground below. It was exactly as if some one had lowered him by a rope.

One of the grooms, who had been watching the window above, made at him, shouting for help; but Jimmy Rogers, running low, as he had been taught in his football days, caught the man with his shoulder, spinning him quite around and upsetting him in the gravel, and, in another instant, was across the drive and on his knees behind a lilac-shrub.

Fortunately, the moon was still under, and a fine rain driving. The night was so dark that no one could see anything six feet away. Jimmy Rogers, behind his shrub, watched the lights spring out from the house, window by window, and heard calls and shouts and the faint banging of doors. He wondered what could have become of Livingstone. It would be rather nasty if they had caught Jerry in that trap, with the chloroformed man in his bed.

He heard the babel of voices in the room above, and, presently, saw young Aberthenay come to the window and lean out, calling to the grooms and stable-boys below. He saw the excited little knot of servants, huddled together with their lanterns, and heard the fellow he had bowled over explaining in a breathless voice.

Then, as if his troubles were not deep enough, a sudden flood of moonlight came down through the scudding clouds, and one of the stable-boys in the group under the window turned and saw the huddled figure behind the lilac-shrub.

As for the hare-and-hounds chase which followed, Jimmy Rogers will forget no detail of it so long as he may live. There was a medley of excited cries, the dancing of many lanterns, the barking of awakened dogs from the kennels, and he was running swiftly and silently through the wet night, and cursing aloud as he ran.

The turf under his feet was soaked and marshy from many weeks of rain. Shrubs and bushes, which he could not

see in the gloom, started up in his path, and whipped his face, or tore at his clothes. Once, he ran full into a small tree, and went staggering to earth. Twice, he ploughed through rising mounds of soft mud—flower-beds, probably. Twice, he stumbled or fell down terraced banks, and once splashed into the artificial pond which he had supposed to lie a quarter of a mile to the east.

And, always, the chase was close behind him. Jimmy Rogers ran extremely well, and his motives for out-doing himself, at this particular occasion, were obviously of the best; but it appeared that there were other good runners abroad that night, and they pressed him hard—so hard that, at last, he dropped between two close-set shrubs and lay still, in the hope of allowing them all to pass, and so make his way unseen back to the house.

He heard them tear by, swinging their lanterns and shouting to one another to spread out more widely. Two of them halted for breath not three yards from where he lay—young Aberthenay and Dicky Greenbrough—and, for some unknown reason, they were laughing till they could hardly stand. Jimmy Rogers, kneeling in a pool of water, cursed them, bitterly.

Then, when they had gone on once more, he crept out from his lair, and walked back toward the house. One of the grooms, standing sentinel with a lantern, set up a cry when he caught sight of him, but Jimmy Rogers spoke, and the man said:

"Beg pardon, sir, I thought as you was the robber, sir." And he went on.

The windows of the house were bright with lights, and he could see people moving back and forth behind them. They looked very warm and dry and comfortable. He wondered miserably how it would feel to be warm and dry and comfortable. It seemed a very, very long time since he had been any one of the three.

Near the drive which bent close to the house, a little knot of returning huntsmen caught sight of him, and, like the groom, set up a shout,

and ran toward him. Jimmy Rogers called out.

"Hello, you chaps! It's only I. Did you get a glimpse of him? I fell in the pond, and came home to dry out. This thief-chasing on a wet night is dashed poor sport."

But the men laughed rather oddly, and stared at him, and one of them said something to another that Jimmy Rogers could not hear.

"Where's Jerry Livingstone?" he went on. "Any of you seen him? It would break his heart to be left out of anything like this." His own heart stood still for an instant while he waited for the answer. A great deal might depend on what had happened to Jerry.

"Livingstone?" they said. "Oh, Livingstone's somewhere about. We saw him a few minutes ago." But they continued to stare very oddly at Jimmy Rogers, and to whisper among themselves when he seemed not to be looking.

"They know," he said to himself; "they know something, anyhow." And, behind his pleasant, nonchalant smile, he was thinking desperately, and making swift plans as to what he must do if the thing should come to a crisis.

"Well," he said, at last, "I don't know just how long you chaps care to stand out here in the cold, but I'm tired of it. Maybe you haven't been rolling in the mud, and splashing about in a dashed little pond, scaring the fishes; but I have, and I'm going in to get warm." He turned toward the side-porch under the porte-cochère, but the other men followed him, closely.

"As if I were going to cut out and run again," he said, morosely, to himself. "Well, I'm not. They can jolly well hang me, if they like. I won't run another yard."

There was the sound of very many people, all talking at once, from the drawing-room to the right of the hall, and, when Jimmy Rogers would have turned away to mount the stairs, the men with him pushed him along

toward this room. "Wait a minute," they said. "The others are all in there. We'll just see if any of them know any more about the thing than we do." And their hands on Jimmy Rogers's shoulders became a bit insistent.

Jimmy Rogers took a long breath, and entered the big drawing-room. There was a sudden hush, upon which the shrill, nasal voice of one of the women, whose back had been turned, rang oddly. He noted with surprise that the whole party seemed to be assembled, and, curiously enough, that many of them were fully dressed, as if they had not been in their beds at all.

"Oh, you've got him? you've got him?" cried one of the women from back in the crowd.

"Got him?" said Jimmy Rogers, smiling. "Lord bless you, no! He's well away, by this time." But his hands and teeth were gripping fiercely as he saw the grave stare that was fixed upon him from every pair of eyes in the room. He took another long breath.

"Well?" he said; "well?"

Then Aberthenay *père* came forward a little. His face was very sober and anxious, and he hesitated, awkwardly, when he attempted to speak.

"Rogers," he said, and paused to moisten his lips; "Rogers—well, you see—it's all very embarrassing, and—and all that sort of—well, it seems that an attempt has been—has been made to-night, to—in short, to chloroform one of my guests in his bed, with—presumably, with robbery as a motive. In fact, he—this guest finds that—that some of his property is—missing, you know. It's very awkward, but I—we—do you happen to have seen anything of it?"

"I?" said Jimmy Rogers; "I? Bless you, no! They all waked me with their howling and bell-ringing, and all, and I followed the others. What should I see of the thing? I don't room near Morrison."

"How did you know it was Mor-

risson?" asked Aberthenay *père*, still very sober and anxious.

"Oh," said Jimmy Rogers, easily, "they told me while we were running after the—thief."

But the elder man shook his head, gravely, and, stepping nearer, lifted the bedraggled and torn mask which had, all the time, hung by its cord from Jimmy Rogers's neck. "And this?" said he; "and this?"

Jimmy Rogers shrugged his shoulders, with a little laugh of defeat. His eyes wandered over the throng of faces that bent eagerly toward him. He remembered for a long time the different expressions which were frozen upon them like masks.

"I expect that does for me," said he, gently; "yes, I expect that does for me. I'm the man. I chloroformed Morrison, and took his keys, and got a sum of money out of his luggage, not so large a sum as I hoped. You see," he explained, smiling into Aberthenay *père's* eyes, "you see, I happen to be rather hard up. I thought I'd fix it well enough not to be caught, but it seems I'm not very clever, am I?"

He glanced from face to face of the throng of people before him, and his eyes met those of Miss Sara Sanderson, very wide and strained and excited. Then, in another instant, the girl had pushed her way through the others, and was facing them beside Jimmy Rogers.

"That is not true!" she cried, and her voice shook; "that is not true! He did not steal any money. He went to—that man's room for some letters of mine, because I asked him to. I made him do it, and now he is lying to save me. I tell you, he did it all for me!" She turned toward Jimmy Rogers, and threw herself, sobbing, upon his breast, holding him by the shoulders.

Jimmy Rogers looked up over her head toward the others, and his face was full of a puzzled, frank concern.

"Miss Sanderson does not know what she is saying," said he. "She's—she's a bit over-excited by all this,

and we—used to be friends, and all. Don't listen to her. I didn't get any letters. I stole some money. I tell you, she doesn't know what she's saying." And then, under cover of the chorus of exclamations and murmurs and questions, he heard the girl saying in his ear, very swiftly and clearly:

"Give me the letters, quick! They may search you. Give me the letters."

He slipped the little packet into her hand, behind the shelter of her loose gown, and the girl, seizing it, turned and held the letters up, so that every one might see.

"Here they are!" she cried; "here are the letters. Now, will you believe me?"

But Jimmy Rogers's look of polite concern changed all at once to a frown of utter bewilderment; for, at the sight of the packet of letters, every one in the room began to laugh—nay, to shout and scream and stamp upon the floor. The women put their heads on each others' shoulders, and shrieked, and the men sat down in convenient chairs, and rocked back and forth, holding their arms close to their bodies.

"What the devil do they mean?" demanded Jimmy Rogers, turning toward the girl. But Miss Sanderson was no longer there. He looked down and found that the letters had been thrust into his hand, and that he was holding them out stiffly before him. He rubbed the back of his hand across his eyes, and looked up once more, frowning; and, over the heads of the other people, he saw Gerald Livingstone and the supposedly chloroformed Morrison part the hangings of the little alcove, where he himself had earlier sat with Miss Sara Sanderson, and move nearer to the throng. Livingstone's arm lay fraternally across the other man's shoulder, and both were smiling from ear to ear. Then, a little, vague glimmer of the truth began to form in Jimmy Rogers's harassed mind.

"Read the letters! read the letters!" gasped some one near him.

He raised the packet, and tore the elastic band from it. Only the top en-

velope bore any writing; those inside were blank and empty. The top envelope contained one sheet of paper, on which was inscribed, in Gerald Livingstone's hand:

"I, the undersigned, do hereby acknowledge that I have obtained full and complete satisfaction for the low and ungentlemanly joke perpetrated upon me on January third by one Jimmy Rogers.

"Signed,  
"GERALD LIVINGSTONE."

Jimmy Rogers looked up from the letter to the helpless and hysterical crowd of people before him, and a deep, purple flush came to his face, and a murderous gleam to his eye. He shook the bundle of papers at them, and attempted to speak; but his tongue refused its work, and he made only choked sounds. Then, he turned, abruptly, and went out of the room.

In the hall, he nearly ran into Miss Alison Cartwright. He was for passing her with a muttered apology, but she caught him by the arm, and looked anxiously up into his face.

"Oh, wait a moment!" she cried, very low; "wait a moment, please! I—I want you to know that—I had nothing to do with all this. I think it was a contemptible joke, and in very

bad taste. Please don't think—I tried to make them give it up when they planned it, and I—wanted to tell you later, but I couldn't do that, quite. Won't you believe that I'd nothing to do with it? You know I tried to warn you, didn't I? didn't I?"

The flush faded from Jimmy Rogers's face, and he looked down at the girl's anxious eyes with something like a smile.

"Yes," he said, gently; "yes, you tried to warn me, didn't you? I was too much of an ass to see it, though. I think," he said, slowly, "I think, next time, I'll pay more attention to what you say." His smile widened a bit. "It *was* rather a good lark—for the rest of them," he admitted. "I expect that, by to-morrow, I'll be able to laugh, too. Only, I'll get even with Jerry Livingstone if I have to come back from the grave to do it."

He started up the stairs, but halted and leaned over the rail.

"Did you—did you have anything on for to-morrow morning?" he asked. "I mean *this* morning. We might—if you cared to—play around that nine-hole course. I'm—very fond of golf."



## EASTER IN THE CITY

FROM the rattle of wheels, and the odor  
Of April and orris and musk,  
Heart-sick of the sounds of the city,  
I turned to the hills of dusk.

I turned to the outland hillsides,  
And the odorous twilight trod—  
From the Spring that is made of the tailor,  
To the Spring that is made of God!

ARTHUR STRINGER.



"I WAS never deceived but once by a woman."  
"How was that?"  
"I married her!"



## “DUMB LIPS”

By Edna Kenton

NO one, save only the woman, wondered at the marriage when it occurred. To outsiders, to the families, it seemed an eminently suitable thing—suitable in the decent sense, too, where love is recognized as a factor.

The woman, after all only a girl of twenty, was an only child, the daughter of a self-made man, whose wealth, coming to him as it did in her babyhood, had been expended on her during all the formative years, and in her young womanhood she was a fine example of what money and the environment it purchases, can do—without centuries of family and good breeding to back it. She was well-educated, refined, a lady, and to all this was added the great gift of beauty, a possession which may sometimes be acquired through wealth and toil and Job-like patience, but which in its fullest sense is birth endowment. Her type was the dark-eyed, dark-haired sort, and her manner a cold, serene and gracious one. In appearance and manner, she satisfied every esthetic impulse in Remington's soul. For that was what Remington was, an esthete, despite formal training and Puritan ancestry and modern business atmosphere. In another age, he might have been a painter, a poet. Had he been born half a century ago, he would have been undoubtedly a follower of Rossetti, a disciple of Burne-Jones, a member of the Brotherhood. For he had all their spirit within him, and, grafted to that, the modern materialism and the modern unrest.

It was Helen Moore's beauty that first attracted Remington. He de-

manded grace and beauty in women, not necessarily as first qualities, but among essentials. Afterward, it was her mysteriousness that appealed to him, the eyes that spoke, the lips that were dumb. He exulted, after their betrothal, in her wonderful restraint, her still raptures. On impersonal matters, she talked well, though not fluently, and she soon finished what she had to say. She had not the power of expanding her thought into a discourse. Of herself, she never spoke, and her feelings and emotions were hidden deep within her. Nothing in her life had ever brought them into speech. She was not unhappy or lonely, but even betrothal, when it came, did not unseal her lips.

Yet, Remington found no flaw in his impulsive romance, no tiniest rift in his lute of love, and, after a honeymoon which had no cloud, he brought his wife back to the home he had made ready for her, and they settled down to every-day living. And then it was that the shadow, whose portending edge only the woman had foreseen, stole nearer, first over her, then over him. For Remington had the gift of tongue, the power of wondrous speech, and by-and-bye his wife's long silences began to pall on him. What had been in the sweetheart, the bride, a girlish shyness, a delicious timidity, a hushed awe before his raptures, became to him, when seen in the wife, stupidity.

They had never been separated in their courtship, and so few notes had been exchanged between them that he had never fathomed the depths or shallows of her written expression. Her few short letters which he pos-

sessed, he had kissed like a fool, and had delighted in the repression of the love he was so fatuously sure of. She had never signed her name to an ardent phrasing, and he had not missed it, had hardly desired it. But, in marriage, and after it, her reserve had not lifted; her speech grew no more fluent. Her expressions of love remained rare. Her expressions of opinions grew rarer. That his definiteness and finality of judgment might, in some measure, account for the holding back of her own, he did not stop to consider.

Once, he deliberately tested her. Some six months after their marriage, he went West for a fortnight, and, while he was gone, he wrote her a letter in which rioted all the facility of expression of which he was past-master. It was not the letter of a husband to a wife; it was the impassioned outpouring of a lover's heart to his lady's soul, the first love-letter he had ever written her. With an eagerness of which he was ashamed, he waited for her reply. It came promptly. She wrote of home happenings, of the dismissal of the second maid, of the engaging of a temporary substitute. At the very close was this paragraph: "I think I need not try to tell you how very lonely the house seems with you away. This has been our longest separation, and I find it hard to grow used to it. I am glad you feel it, too. I am looking eagerly for your return. I was glad to get your letter. I have had so few of them." It was signed, "Yours faithfully."

There is a certain stage in evolution where the slow gropings and creepings of uncounted ages seem, in comparison, suddenly to leap toward a definite end, a stage where all past time counts for its full value, with no second wasted. This letter marked that stage in Remington's marital evolution. Up to that time, he had, so far as he knew, been merely amused at his wife's seeming limitations. Now, they appeared to him real, and he grew impatient, and then resentful, and finally indifferent, absolutely indifferent. Stillness lost its charm. What he had

called mystery became commonplace in the white light of every-day familiarity. Within a year, to his own personal satisfaction, he had solved his wife completely, and, to Remington, solution meant stagnation. She was a beautiful piece of still life, a woman domestic and altogether good, who cared but little for the arts—he was obliged to except music, though he doubted exceedingly how far her intelligent appreciation of that art went, for she did not play, and her lips did not tell it, and he had lost the key to the speech her eyes held. And, by-and-bye, they, too, grew still and calm.

When they had been married two years, matters were at a serious pass—at that dangerous stage where restlessness may precipitate much; and Remington was chafing under the monotony that had settled over his home. His friends were not her friends, and her friends—but she had no friends; she was not that sort of woman. Yet, Remington was never for a second ashamed of her. If she were only a figurehead, she was a beautiful one, and, if she could not talk, she could at least keep silent. That, in a woman who cared but little for art and letters, was a quality worth much with the sort of friends Remington delighted in and gathered about him.

So, at the end of two years, the separation, working gradually through the months, was at last almost complete. Both of them had accepted the situation quietly, without words. Remington smiled grimly at the idea of talking it over with her. In the eyes of their world, they were by no means food for gossip. They had been quiet people before, and they were quiet people still. They seemed merely to have completed the final analysis of marriage, to have resolved it into its component parts, to have found their own chemical properties simply incapable of blending.

It was during the third year that a new friend of Remington's began coming to the latter's home. He was an artist, a portrait-painter, and he forthwith conceived an inordinate ad-

miration of Mrs. Remington's beauty, and a desire to immortalize himself through her. After a few weeks, he divulged this wish to them one night, and received with undisguised delight Mrs. Remington's serene, and her husband's rather astonished, but none the less flattered, acquiescence. For the painter was a known seeker after soul, rather than feature, and Remington wondered at this desertion to the enemy.

Fully two months elapsed before the portrait was begun. Meantime, the painter came night after night, till finally a certain chair became associated with his presence and was always ready for him. There he would sit, listening to Remington's always interesting chat, and meantime watching Helen's face, creamy and pale; her eyes, great, somber, velvet-brown things, brooding and still; her mouth, quiet and dumb. It happened once, perhaps, in an evening, that Remington would appeal to his wife on some point or other. Usually, it was for some trifling date that had slipped his mind, or the place of some etching or curio, and, quite as often as not, her answer was the simple bringing to him of the thing he desired. In her girlhood, Helen Moore had talked but little. Helen Remington, after two years, was slowly losing the power of speech.

From his shadowy vantage point, the painter watched this woman with a growing fascination. An impatient note in Remington's voice one night told him the man's side. The woman's story grew more slowly in his mind. For her voice never betrayed her, and her face was a mask. Whatever she might or might not feel, her tones were always the same soft, level ones, charming in their very monotony.

Once, besides the painter, a young musician and his wife dropped in for a Sunday evening. They had with them their three-year-old boy, a picture to gloat over in his black velvet coat and hat, his pink silk socks and black shoes, with his white frock peeping from the coat's edges. The

child had never before seen Helen, and the painter became interested in the interest which she all unknowingly excited in him. For she was listening to Hoffman play. Off to one side of the long room, Remington and Mrs. Hoffman were talking in low tones. At the piano, Hoffman was drifting from the mere proving of some contested phrasing into a delightful mood of twilight reverie, and was playing Chopin with rapturous devotion. Helen was lying back in her chair. Her eyes were closed, and her mouth drooped wearily, almost sadly. Her hands were folded together, after a manner peculiarly her own. The fire-light leaped here and there over the unilluminated room, now showing the far figures, now veiling them; now throwing dazzling lights over the rose-wood piano, now leaving it and its player in black shadow. It leaped upon the *écru*-gowned woman, caressed her throat, played with her masses of dark hair, cast great, black shadows on her pale cheeks from the dusky lashes that veiled her eyes. It played all about the child who slipped here and there in questioning wise, stopping often now and then to turn back to where the pale, still woman sat. At last, he crept softly into the very centre of the shifting light, and crept doubtfully up to her, and laid his hand upon her knee.

Mrs. Remington opened her eyes. She glanced down at the little hand, and drew a sharp breath. Then, she caught the boy up to her with a hungry sweep that almost frightened him. She soothed him directly with a few murmured words, and then held him quietly through the remaining half-hour of the Hoffmans' stay.

All that evening, long after the others had gone, the painter stayed, curled in a privileged heap in his dark corner. Before he left, he had arranged for Mrs. Remington's first sitting—for the next morning.

For a month, the painter worked with loving elaboration on her portrait. He placed her against a dull background, and he painted her in a

filmy black gown. And somehow, during the long, intimate hours in the studio, her stumbling tongue found a sort of speech, in shy questions, at first, about art, about processes, about the very mixing of paints. She was entirely at her ease with him. She had always been so from their first meeting, and he had felt greatly flattered, for she did not care for many people.

Yet, she never lifted the veil from her own personality. He discovered what he had long suspected—that she had opinions of her own, and good ones, opinions well worth hearing, though she was no artist and no great reader. She never made pretenses. There was not a shred of sham about her. He discovered she did love music, not only with her heart, but with her head. Only once, when she was betrayed into speaking of that passion, did she betray herself ever so slightly. And that glimpse of her inner self was as through a dark glass.

They had been talking of Hoffman, his ability, and the painter had learned what struck him as a little odd, that Chopin was her favorite among the masters. It was a taste hard to reconcile—the great composer's poetry with her seeming prose, his mysticism with her apathy, his moonlight splendor with her dull atmosphere. If she had said Beethoven, or Bach, he would not have been surprised. But Chopin and Helen Remington! Yet, it was no pose. In all his knowledge of her, he had yet to discover the faintest trace of a pose. In fact, she had too little of it for a happy woman.

"By the way," he said, at last, his mind still busy with these thoughts, "I have often asked, only to be put off, that you play me some of your favorites when I drop in on you. Promise me that you will play for me to-night. Promise me before you get up." For the sitting was over, and she had half-risen.

"No," she said, with her monotony that charmed him.

"But why, and again why?" he persisted. "You play; otherwise you could not love music so intelligently."

Her face flushed, suddenly. "Yes," she said, stammeringly; "yes, I used to play—a little. Of course, I studied; but it was mere manual dexterity, and that has gone now. You see, I have not—the gift of expression. And I will not murder what I love. No, I do not play."

"I do not believe that," the painter said, slowly. "I do not believe that you cannot speak out your soul—play it," he added, in contrite amendment.

Mrs. Remington turned away. She picked up her furs, nervously.

"No," she said again, "you are quite mistaken. Some are denied that gift. I should like to play Chopin for you, but—I cannot."

The painter watched her go away. Then, he went over to the canvas he had been working on, and stood before it, meditatively. The face there was not a happy one, nor was it quite unhappy. But it had in it the look—yes, that was her own word—the look of one denied. It had her look of serene surrender. He had never before seen this inner rebellion against her fate. He picked up his brushes, irresolutely. A line here and there, perhaps— He laid them down. The thing was too nearly done; indeed, it was all but finished. It was true, as the world would always see her, as he had seen her until to-day. To put that lately revealed thing there would be dastardly; in a sense, untrue. The attempt might mean failure for both conceptions.

His eye fell idly on a small canvas lying ready stretched near him. His face lighted up. He set it quickly on an easel, and began to sketch swiftly with a bit of charcoal. It was only a head, its salient points touched briefly; a head set on wonderful shoulders, whose sweep he laid on in one stroke. Then, he flung the charcoal away, and took up his brushes.

For four hours he worked, glancing behind him, now and then, to where the almost-finished portrait of Helen

Remington stood; but it was only for a reminiscent line, not for inspiration. By-and-bye, from the smoky, greenish background, the head of the woman began to take on life. The painter's colors were true to the hundredth of a sliding scale. The dusky hair, the tea-rose skin, the lips that were scarlet and beautiful—the only really beautiful feature about the face—over the mouth and those lips the painter lingered as he lingered nowhere else, for he meant them to express pure beauty. Then, the eyes began to come, to burn from their hollow setting. Dark, somber eyes they were, full of pain and renunciation, vain dreams and baffled longing, loneliness and spirit woe. They did not speak; they cried out.

At the end of the four hours, the painter laid his brushes down with a long breath, and looked—satisfied. He fumbled about, nervously, until he found a bit of brass name-plate unengraved. A queer fancy had come to him. He wished to get the thing framed and named. He wished to see the name-plate under it. He looked again at the color scheme. It was wonderful!—no touch of color anywhere, save in those wonderful lips, and a blare of red velvet bodice, with even that glimpse of garmenting half-smothered in sable. He put the wet sketch carefully aside. Then, he dropped the bit of brass in his pocket to leave at an engraver's, and went away.

One afternoon, three weeks later, Remington dropped in at the painter's studio. The painter had asked him to come and give an opinion about the framing of his wife's portrait. Remington had seen it in process of painting and since its completion, and, after a mere passing glance at it, he became interested in framings. He soon made up his mind—Remington's mind moved like lightning, always—and then he went breezily about the long room, turning over cherished arrangements of canvases here and there. Suddenly, he halted.

"Hullo!" he said, softly. He was

standing before a brackonette in a far corner. He picked up a dully-framed sketch, and brought it over to the light.

"'Dumb Lips,'" he read, slowly. "My God, I should say so! 'Dumb Lips'! Say, when did you do this thing?"

The painter turned, startled. Then, he held himself by the firm leash of his will. A queer light stole into his eyes.

"That," he said, evenly, "doesn't amount to much. An idle sketch, in an idle hour."

Remington was looking at it from all points, confirming his first enthusiasm.

"It's the best thing you've ever done," he said, at last. "It beats anything here all hollow. Where'd you get your model? Half-starved her first?"

The painter started again. He shot a quick glance over his shoulder at the portrait, standing almost within arm's reach of both of them. He looked back at Remington, almost incredulously. He looked at his sketch. He could not believe it held so little of the woman. It had not been a sketch from life; he had not meant that it should be. But that it was so little a sketch from memory he could not believe.

"Oh," he answered, indifferently, "it's half-fancy, half-life."

Remington laid it down, only to return to it time and again.

"Seems to me that woman's crying out for everything," he said, once. "Her eyes make me shiver. What gave you the idea?"

"A look I once saw in a woman's eyes," the painter answered, briefly, from behind a cloud of smoke.

"Lord!" said Remington, shortly. "You weren't the man who brought it there?"

"No," said the painter, curtly, "I wasn't the man."

"But it was a man," asserted Remington.

"Yes," said the painter; "yes."

At last, Remington got up to go, and almost irresistibly he went back for a



final look at the picture which had so enthralled him.

"You don't want to get rid of this yet?" he asked, casually. "Give me first refusal on it."

The painter sat in silence behind his clouds of smoke, weighing many matters. His eyes darkened and brightened and darkened again behind their hazy screen. At last, he sprang up and began to fish about for some wrapping paper.

"For the love of heaven, Remington!" he said, grimly, with more determination than certainty in his voice, "take it along with you and be happy. Only—" the painter hesitated slightly—"don't make a general exhibition of it; not yet."

He stopped Remington's protestations and thanks, and his eager tender of it back, at any time, for exhibition purposes.

"But you needn't think," Remington called out, as he opened the door, "that I've any trace of a desire to exhibit this around, promiscuously. It's too much like an open wound. I'm crazy over it. It's a sort of fetish, already."

The painter retreated to his couch, and laid himself down in quiet; he took up his pipe, and puffed perplexedly.

"Now," he said to himself, "this is certainly the very deuce! For, when she sees that, she will curse me for betraying her. And that blind bat, that mole, that—" His synonymic powers ceased, abruptly. "Well," he concluded, "I win or I lose. By so much is uncertainty eliminated."

Yet, he was hardly comforted. And Remington's momentary appearance the next day simply extended the situation, indefinitely.

"Your picture's safe," Remington said, with a queer embarrassment. "You know that old Venetian cabinet we have in the drawing-room? It's inside that. Here's the key." He touched his key-ring. "Nobody's seen it yet. No," in answer to a compelling question in the painter's eyes, "not even Helen. Somehow, do you know," Remington continued, still

with that queer hesitancy about his ready tongue, "I've got a crazy sort of notion about that thing. I don't want everybody to see it, you know—people that wouldn't understand or appreciate it. I tell you, I'm daffy."

And then he laughed, almost awkwardly, and went away.

It was almost a week before the painter got himself enough together to go over to the Remingtons'. But, save for a warmer welcome than usual, induced by his long absence from them, conditions were evidently the same. Helen still sat calmly in her high-armed chair across from him. Her eyes were the same calm, brooding ones. That one flash of hidden fire had been pressed back and smothered again. And, all through the Winter, the third of the marriage, matters went on in the same monotonous round.

One night, in the early Spring, the painter made his appearance about eight o'clock, to find Remington housed with a hard cold, and a theatre-party on for the evening. Helen was ready to go, reluctant to leave her husband, glad that the painter had come in, though his coming rendered her only the more undecided about going away. She was nerve-sensitive to any possible imputation of neglect on her part toward Remington. That thing she strove to prevent, both for him and her.

"Do go on, Helen, please," Remington said, at length, hoarsely and wearily. "Of course, you can telephone; but it should have been done three hours ago. I'm only absolutely raging with discomfort. If death or further disaster comes on me and smites me, we can call up the theatre."

Helen drew a little breath. "Very well," she said, quietly, and left them.

It was well on toward eleven o'clock when Remington got up from his couch, and went over to the Venetian cabinet which rested against the far wall.

"You've got to show it," he said, as he unlocked the doors, as if in further urging of some mooted question. "It isn't as if it were a real woman. You

said it was half-fancy. I know how you feel about it. Lord, man, haven't I told you I'm crazy over it? But the showing of it may mean everything for you. It's the best thing you ever did. It's got all the superb freshness of first lines about it. You haven't dabbled over it, and detailed all the haunting mystery out of it. That dumb mouth!"

The painter came over to Remington. His cigar was dead.

"Cut it, Remington," he said, crisply. "When I told you it was half-fancy, I lied. It's a living woman. Lock it up, up yonder, away——"

There was a soft sweep along the polished floor, a velvety rush of skirts. Helen came toward them, slowly, as was her wont, her rich cloak half-falling from her white shoulders. Her black gown trailed behind her.

"You are able to be up, Paul?" she said, anxiously. "I didn't stay for the last act."

She looked at the painter. He had started at her voice, had made an ineffectual movement toward the table where the canvas lay. She glanced in that direction, and the dull shine of the paint caught her eye. She moved nearer to them. Remington was distinctly conscious of a half-guilty feeling, through what psychological process he hardly knew.

"You brought up something fresh?" she asked the painter. He turned abruptly away as she bent over the sketch. He watched the sudden drawing together of her shoulders as she caught the idea. He followed her eyes as they traveled swiftly downward to where the title gleamed against the dull frame.

Then, she raised herself and simply looked at them both, briefly at the painter, long at her husband. As she stood facing Remington, with the background of the dark walls behind her, a growing, thrilling, throbbing fire in her eyes, the painter saw before him, leaping into living flesh, the prototype of that sketch lying there beneath a glaring, tulip-shaded lamp. And the other man, too, saw.

For Remington was staring at her with amazement, wonder, almost fear. One glance he shot downward at the painting; then, he looked again at his wife.

"Helen!" he cried, sharply.

She stopped his sudden step toward her. "Don't!" she said. There was something in her voice he had never heard before. Her cloak slipped slowly from her shoulders. It fell at last in a glittering heap about her feet. She laid one ungloved hand on the table. Then, she looked straight into her husband's eyes.

"I am so tired of all this," she said, clearly; "so tired! So are you. I should never have married you. I should have been brave enough to say no. I never understood why you wanted me, why you should have fancied for a little while that you loved me—not till too late. You thought wonderful things lay behind my silences, and, when we were married and that which you thought was there did not come out, and it was mystery no longer, and seemed only stupidity, then you grew weary. I don't blame you much. Women made as I am cannot hold men. I can't make myself like the others. I could not tell you—how I loved you. Other women can talk out hidden things, can take outsiders, any one, behind the holy veil. I cannot take—I could not take—even you. I have tried. I do not suppose it is possible for you to understand me. For two years, we have been more separated in life than some are in death. Now and then, you have cast me a word, a word that has hurt more often than it has healed. You have never seen what lay back of the stillness." She stopped, and looked over at the painter. "I saw you knew one night here—when that baby came over to me—that I could have been happier." Her hands wrung themselves together, the gloved against the ungloved one. Then, she went steadily on:

"That other morning in the studio—it was the one confession of my confessionless life. I have not the power

of expression. He needs it in a woman. He is disappointed in me. I am tired of pretending to him, to myself, to his world. There is nothing to hold us together—nothing. Tell him to let me go away. He would be happier, not so irritated, more at peace. He would not miss me at all, save, perhaps, the mere bodily presence. He would forget that."

She stopped, nerveless. The painter came over to her as she stood panting against the table edge.

"Quick!" he said, imperiously. "Tell him the truth before you stop, that you leave him for love of him—for love's sake!"

Once again, she looked at Remington directly, dully. "Yes," she said, passively; "I love you enough to go away, to make you happier without me than you can be with me. Enough for that, enough for that!"

She was muttering the words over, almost stupidly. Her eyes were half-

closed, and long, wavelike shudders crept over her.

Remington bent down like a criminal, and picked up her cloak. He wrapped it about her. Suddenly, his hand struck at the table, sharply.

"Not understand you!" he said, savagely, harshly. "No, I never have! But this painted thing—it's struck me deep. For two months, I've had it locked away from any eyes, your eyes—your eyes that could not understand. How, in God's name, have I come to understand this lifeless thing, to worship it, and all in blindness? I locked it away from you—you! I thought you couldn't understand!"

The painter turned softly and slipped unnoticed from the room. He went down the avenue with long, swinging strides.

"I knew it!" he said, over and over again, with a half-insane exulting. "I knew that she could tell it out. I knew that she could tell it!"



## ON HEART-BREAK ROAD

"OH, the road is hard," laughed one,  
 "Bitter the weather;  
 Let's bide at the inn of Forgetfulness,  
 Drunken together—  
 Heigho, heigho!  
 Drunken together!"

"Oh, the road is hard," wept one,  
 "Sorry the trying;  
 Let's lie 'neath the walls of our Hearts' Desire,  
 Wretchedly dying—  
 Alas, alas!  
 Wretchedly dying!"

"Oh, the road is hard," prayed one;  
 "Grant us to-morrow  
 To knock at the gates of thy Perfect Peace,  
 Purged by our sorrow—  
 Spare us, good Lord,  
 Purged by our sorrow."

EMERY POTTLE.

# THE JUDGMENT OF ALL-HALLOWS

By Beatrix Buchanan

THE VICARAGE, GLASTON.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24.

**M**Y DEAR DOLLIE:

Henceforth, I abandon you as hopeless! I besought your advice, and you regaled me with scoffings, heartless jests, and quotations of prodigious antiquity; so, I shall look to you no more for assistance, but do my best to wriggle out of this dire dilemma, alone and unaided!

But you need not tell me I am not in love with either of them, for if *I* do not know the sensation of being in love, I should like to know who does. Alas, my heart is of so peculiarly elastic a fabric that I have felt the sensation too often, already, to deceive myself now! Though you refuse to give me any help, I presume you are still interested in me and my boys, so, let your hair rise on end, and stand upright, while you read the alarming intelligence that, by this day week, I must make up my mind whether I will be Mrs. Tom Trelawney, or Mrs. Claude Phillipson! Isn't it truly awful, Dollie, when you reflect that I really love them both?

Now, I must tell you how things have been brought to this fearful pass. You know Tom is walking the hospitals, and Claude is writing a play, don't you? Well, Tom—so he says—sees my face between him and all his patients and physic bottles, so that he muddles them all up—a horrid idea, to muddle *me* up with sick people and black draughts, isn't it?—and Claude announces that all the characters in his play, be they women, or be they men; be they saints, or be they—the other things, all are growing into liv-

ing images of me, and he fears the manager may consider the result a trifle monotonous.

So, the boys, who, as you know, have been chums for years, put their wise young heads together and concocted a letter, which Tom wrote, saying that, as I had known for months how dear I was to them both, they would be infinitely obliged to me if I would put an end to their agonizing suspense, and that the one who was so unfortunate as not to be chosen, would leave the country, and return only when he could meet me calmly as the wife of his dearest friend! Oh, Dollie, fancy my having to banish one of my boys, when I simply can't exist without the pair! The dear donkeys complicated matters by writing to dad, and explaining why they had pressed me for an answer, and the result was that dad called me into his study this morning, and talked to me quite seriously.

"Peggie," he said, in his solemn, churchy fashion, "it seems to me you have been encouraging these two young men to think you care for one of them; now, which one is it?"

"I don't know, dad," I made answer, in sober truth.

"Don't know!" ejaculated my revered parent, in much perplexity. "Don't you care for either of them, my child?"

"On the contrary, dad, I love them both to distraction," I said, almost weeping, "but I can't marry either of them when it means that the other will go away, and I sha'n't see him again for ages, possibly years!"

Dad frowned, unfeelingly, and I saw

at once that no help would come from his direction.

"Peggie," he said, and, believe me, his voice sounded as it does when he is delivering one of his Lenten addresses, "it is a sore trial to me to see you approach such a solemn subject as marriage in such a reprehensible spirit of levity. Either you love one of these young men, or you love neither of them. For a week, you may give the matter full consideration; on next Monday, you must let me know the result. Meanwhile, to facilitate your decision, I am asking Tom to dine with us to-morrow night, and Claude on Thursday. I am afraid, Peggie, this lamentable state of your mind would not have existed had your dear mother been spared to us. I hoped I had filled her place a little more satisfactorily. There, run along, my child!"

Poor, dear old daddy!

Just outside the study door I met Major Savile, and I am convinced dad confided his anxieties to him, for there was positively a wicked twinkle in his quizzical gray eyes at luncheon. I am not sure that I like quizzical eyes; do you? And, when dad mentioned Mrs. Hopper, the new woman of our parish, the major said: "I don't fancy those stern members of the gentler sex; a true woman ought to find some difficulty in making up her mind, eh, Peggie?" Of course, I blushed like an idiot!

I wonder when Major Savile is going. How he can enjoy life in this dreary old vicarage, after tasting of the joys of India, passes my comprehension. He has been here seven weeks, and never talks of going. He annoys me in some things; I don't see why he should look so very much younger than dad, when they are just the same age. His hair is rather pretty, very thick and wavy, and only flecked here and there with silver, while poor old dad's is snowy white, and painfully skimpy on top; but that is as it should be at the age of forty-two, isn't it? Major Savile certainly cheers dad up a good bit, but I wish he would remember that I have worn long dresses and had

my hair up for the last two years. A man is such a silly who treats a grown-up young woman as if she were still at school. Now, Tom and Claude are so different; they both understand I'm grown-up, though they knew me years ago. They are so sensible, dear things!

Oh, Dollie, how my spirit groans within me! What am I to do? If only some strong, capable person would come forward and settle the momentous question now and for evermore, or if only I could marry them both! But I suppose the very thought of such a thing should appall me; so, farewell! Pray that to-morrow night may clear my difficulties away, and believe me, dearest,

Yours eternally,

PEGGIE.

THE VICARAGE, GLASTON.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25. 11.30 P.M.

DEAR OLD DOLL:

It is all settled, and you can't think what a load is off my mind! Of course, it is Tom I love best of all—dear, bright, merry Tom! He looked just a trifle—well, sheepish—if that isn't too ugly a word to apply to such a darling!—when he first came into the room, and seemed awfully absorbed in the buckles on his shoes; but he just rattled on in his usual light-hearted way, and what do you think?—he brought me a box of the most lovely marrons glacés I have ever seen; but he didn't give them to me himself; he asked the maid to put them in my room. Before going away, he managed to whisper: "Peg, dear, there's something up-stairs for you, and, when you go up, you'll eat them, and think of me, won't you?" They were most delicious, and I did think of him while I ate them, and came to the conclusion that I could not possibly ever regret marrying the dear boy. I think I had better let dad hear to-morrow morning that I know my own mind at last, and then Claude won't come on Thursday. Poor old Claude!

The evening went off very well, with only one tiny hitch, when Major Savile was a nuisance at dinner. He



got on the subject of that silly Education Bill that dad is so much interested in, and drew out Tom's notions concerning it. And, to tell you the truth in confidence, dear Dollie, I don't believe Tom knows any more about it than I do, and probably cares as little. I must admit, too, that the poor boy's remarks were not over-brilliant! I quite felt for him, naturally, for, if there is a really objectionable topic of conversation, it's politics. One always has to put on an interested, comprehending expression when one is simply bored to death, and, personally, I find it beastly hard to chime in with an intelligent remark at the right moment. This all goes to prove how truly Tom and I are suited to each other, doesn't it? The major is always talking politics with dad, which is extremely boring for me, and I do hate an old man who delights in making a young one look like a fool, don't you?

Well, it's long past midnight now, Dollie, so I'll wish you good night. You are to be my chief bridesmaid, of course. What would you like to wear? I am sure you will look a love in anything, and I know you will adore Tom when you come to know him well. Good night!

Yours, peacefully at last,  
PEGGIE.

P. S.—On further consideration, Dollie, dear, I think it would be wiser not to tell dad just yet about my sudden decision, lest he should be more distressed than ever, and think I have not weighed the matter sufficiently in my mind. Do you think Peggie Trelawney sounds really well?

THE VICARAGE, GLASTON.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27. 11.45 P.M.  
DEAREST DOLL:

I hope you have destroyed the last idiotic letter I sent you! I can't think how I could ever have written it, or thought of marrying Tom, when such a brilliant being exists as my Claude! He has only just gone, and, of course, I am hurrying to tell you all about it, and you must answer by return of post with hearty congratulations! I am so

glad you haven't replied to my last letter yet; it would have been so awkward to have received congratulations about Tom, now that I am convinced it is Claude who is the lodestar of my existence! Oh, Dollie, he looked so pale this evening, and, even when I wasn't looking at him, I felt his eyes were on me; and I could read suspense in their glorious depths! I do like dark eyes best, don't you, Dollie? There is such fire in them; and, you know, though Tom's blue eyes are very sweet, they are nothing to Claude's! And Claude doesn't wear a silly little downy mustache like Tom's. Clean-shaven men always look so much more interesting, don't they? I am sure Claude will shortly be recognized as the greatest living genius; he is such a wonderful, soulful poet. When I came up to my room just now, I found some exquisite red roses, and a beautiful verse of his own writing, all about me! It is absolutely sacred to me, or I would copy it out for your delectation; but you must be contented with imagining how sweet it is.

Would you believe it, my dear, that odious Major Savile actually corrected Claude at dinner when he was quoting some lovely lines that he said were Shelley's? The major said that they were Pope's, and that Claude had altered them a bit; then, he quoted them again his own way, and I must admit they sounded a teeny-weeny scrap nicer, though not very much! Claude's eyes just flashed a bit, and he said, in his splendid, manly way:

"Pardon me, major; I can assure you my version is the correct one!"

But the major only laughed, and said:

"Very well, my dear boy; just look the passage up when you get home. I shouldn't be surprised if my memory's played me false again."

I shall look it up myself, to-morrow; though, of course, I know Claude is right.

Do you know, Dollie, I am sure that if I had married Tom, Claude would have died of a broken heart? He is just one of those intense, nervous, artis-

tic people who are all heart, and his very eyes tell me he adores me! Tom, of course, will feel a bit depressed when dad tells him the news, but those happy-go-lucky natures never feel very deeply, do they?

Heigho! I feel quite solemn to-night! Fancy me the wife of a perfect genius like Claude? Do you think crêpe de chine is better than the orthodox white satin for my wedding gown? Of course, it wouldn't wear so well, but that doesn't matter, does it? I always pity the poor brides who are everlastingly appearing in réchauffés of their wedding gowns! Oh, the peace of having it all settled at last, and rightly settled, too! I shall wait till Monday to tell dad, as Claude is so sweet with that anxious look in his eyes, and I shall always sign my name Margaret Phillipson; I don't like the alliteration of Peggie, do you? Good-bye, my dear old Dollie!

Your happy, happy,

PEGGIE.

P. S.—I wish to goodness dad hadn't told Major Savile about my boys. His eyes are always teasing me, and I can see them now, asking me when I am going to know my own mind! I do wish he would go away before I tell dad. I hate being laughed at, don't you?

Second P. S.—I wonder where Tom will take himself? I *do* hope he will choose a climate that suits him, poor darling!

THE VICARAGE, GLASTON.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28.

DEAR DOLLIE:

Once more I am the most miserable of girls! I can't do it! I can't marry Claude and banish my dear Tom, who is so cheery and helpful! Claude, of course, is perfect, but I fancy he would depress me at times. Again, I know Tom's wild flow of spirits might occasionally get on my nerves, and I can almost hear myself saying: "Tom, for heaven's sake, be quiet!"

And yet, it is delicious to have some one at hand who is palpably happy in this weary world, isn't it? Of course,

Claude would be very restful; just think of sitting in the room with him, while marvelous thoughts and ideas career through his poetic brain, and just picture me being fêted and caressed by the thousands of great people yearning to be in touch with the poet of the century!

Now, Tom, also, would make an ideal husband; he would get me a hunter, and let me ride after the hounds, and that would be such a treat, after dad's old-womanish scruples and misgivings about my riding. Woe is me! The more I think, the more addled my head becomes. Is there no help for me—none? I was awake nearly all night wondering if things would ever shape themselves, and that nasty Major Savile looked at me so hard at breakfast when I handed him his second cup of tea.

"H'm! Peggie, you look as if you had had a bad night," he remarked, brutally. "Little girls who don't sleep must have something on their minds!"

Beast! I genuinely hate the man! Poor old dad beams mild inquiry at me daily from behind his glasses, and I wish to goodness I could give him an answer! I have only two more whole days in which to decide. Aid me, Dollie, or I shall die!

Yours distractedly,

PEGGIE.

P. S.—By the way, I looked up the quotation under discussion last night. It *is* Pope's; so, Major Savile was right! I really don't wonder poor Claude forgets things sometimes; his mind is like a great caldron, seething with marvelous imaginings. As for that stupid major, he is a mere walking encyclopedia. I hate people who know everything, don't you?

THE VICARAGE, GLASTON.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29.

DEAR DOLLIE:

I've got it—a veritable inspiration that darted into my brain as I was putting out the clean surplices for tomorrow! Never did I think I should

rise to my own rescue in so wonderful a manner! Why, to-morrow night will be All-hallows Eve, and the spirits that be shall decide my fate! I shall place myself unreservedly in their hands, observing the necessary ritual, and at the witching hour I shall arise, and comb my hair, and bite an apple before a mirror, when I shall behold him, whichever of them it be, looking over my shoulder. Confess, Doll, it's a fine way of settling it. I am hugely pleased with the cuteness of my little self, but I don't know how I shall exist till the great moment comes, for I feel in my ever-prophetic bones that *he* will appear, and I pledge myself to abide by the judgment of All-hallows!

And now, I must keep Tom and Claude continually and impartially before my mental eyes. Oh, Dollie, little will you dream, when you are snoring placidly in your snug little bed, that your poor Peggie is bravely invoking the aid of the supernatural to settle the course of her future life! And think, to do the thing properly—for I don't believe in doing things by halves—I shall not consult the looking-glass in my own cozy room. No! I shall leave the prosaic, modern portion of the house, and betake myself to the large mirror which hangs in the corridor of the old, old wing; and, though inwardly I may quake, outwardly I shall comport myself with the necessary pluck and determination. So, now, farewell, my Dollie. My next letter will contain the all-important, final piece of news, so I sign myself now,

Yours, dear, with much solemnity,  
PEGGIE.

THE VICARAGE, GLASTON.

ALL-HALLOWS NIGHT. 12.30 A.M.

DARLING DOLL:

Oh, oh, oh! the unspeakable horrors of this dreadful night! Let me cast some of its awfulness away by confiding it to you, relying always on your ancient promise to consign my epistles to the flames!

I am undone, Dollie! The spirits have not answered my appeal, but

something fearful has happened, instead. I know not how I am to survive the next few days; death, oblivion of any sort, would be welcome, and I wish Tom and Claude at the furthest ends of the universe for having forced me into such a situation. Let me unburden myself, my dear.

I stayed in the study with dad and the major till eleven o'clock, though I was yawning prodigiously, and dad kept begging me to go to bed, until, at last, the major said: "You really look as sleepy as an owl, little girl." (How I abominate being called "little girl"!)

"What on earth makes you persist in sitting up to-night?" Then, like the fool I am, I promptly blushed, and had to retire lest that same objectionable blush should raise suspicion in his busy mind! What a detestable man he is!

Well, I whiled away the moments alone up here till I heard dad and the major say good night; then, I looked at my watch, and, behold, it was five minutes to twelve! I had unbound my hair, so it was all hanging over my shoulders, and I put on my best white wrapper to propitiate the invisibles; then, I went forth, armed with a lighted candle, an apple, and my comb. I felt a trifle shivery with nervousness, and rejoiced thereat, as being an appropriate sensation, and I reached the corridor without meeting a soul or hearing the faintest noise. The outside elements smiled at my endeavors, for the moon came streaming in through the window by the mirror, and I could see the church quite plainly, and the shining white tombstones that looked so cold and deserted out there in the stillness of the night! The effect was most ghostlike, so I blew out my candle, and opened the window wide. The wind was sharp and Wintry, and I have never experienced anything like the icy thrills that ran down my spine as I waited there in solitude for the clock to strike. Then, one, two, three—I bit bravely into the apple, and combed my hair for dear life while the metallic old clock went on—four, five—Horrors! I heard footsteps approaching behind me, and I shut my

eyes, still munching the apple at the risk of dying an inglorious death by choking. Six, seven, eight— The foot-steps were almost at my side, and, with a supreme effort, I opened my eyes.

Dollie! There, facing me in the mirror, I beheld Major Savile, with an expression of utter bewilderment written large on his countenance! He put his hand on my shoulder, and asked me, in peculiar tones: "What are you doing here, Peggie?"

At first, I had been paralyzed with fear, but, at the sound of a human voice, I dropped the apple, wrenched myself free, and fled for all I was worth back to the shelter of my own room.

Oh, Dollie, here I sit, still shaking in every limb, my door locked, and my heart beating so madly that I can almost hear as well as feel it! What must the major think of me? What were the spirits doing, that they did not protect me, even if they would not befriend me? And, oh, when Major Savile tells dad, what shall I do? Poor old dad! he'll break his heart to think I am so full of superstition. There is nothing he despises like superstition; I'm sure I don't know why, for it certainly adds to the thrilliness of life! I left my candlestick and the remnant of apple behind me, and, when the major finds them, he is so cute that he may possibly guess my purpose! Of course, he will report the whole thing to dad, and then the murder must out! Was ever girl in such hobble before? I wonder. To think of all I have braved, and yet won nothing! Well, it will do no good to sit up any later, so good night. Pity me, dear Dollie, from the utmost depths of your sympathetic heart!

Yours, bowed with shame and confusion,

PEGGIE.

THE VICARAGE, GLASTON,  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1.

MY PRECIOUS DOLL:

The spirits were not so very much out, after all! My dear, prepare for a great surprise while I relate to you the ending of all my woes.

When I had finished my last letter to you, I flung myself into my downy couch, where I dreamed of hideous hobgoblins who mocked at my despair; and, when Jane appeared this morning with my tea, I felt the very limpest of washed-out rags. But I gathered my last remaining sparks of energy together, and, as soon as I had my clothes on, I dashed off in search of my lost relics. Horrible to relate, not a candle or an apple was to be found, and you can't think how prosaic the spot looked in the pale morning sunshine. Alas, I looked still more prosaic with cheeks that resembled nothing so much as my own lost candle. Breakfast was an awful ordeal. I never dared to peep at Major Savile till I knew him to be engrossed in his paper, and even then, his ear and the back of his curly head, which alone were visible, seemed to me bristling with curiosity and amusement. I got into hot water by giving him the wrong cup of tea.

"Good heavens, Peggie," he cried, when he tasted it, "have you emptied the whole sugar-bowl into this luckless cup? What is your motive for sweetening me up this morning?"

Gruesome, wasn't it? As soon as breakfast was over, dad wandered off to the schools, and I was about to follow him, when the major made me pause.

"One moment, Peggie!" he said; "I have found some belongings of yours, and, if you come with me now, I will show you where I put them."

No choice was left me but to follow him into the morning-room, feeling, indeed, a mere worm of earth. He went over to the window-seat, and drew forth from behind it the tell-tale candlestick, and the remains of the apple, now brown and shriveled like a miniature mummy. Then, he deposited his spoil on the table, and looked at me. Dollie, never in all my former existence did I so curse myself for being short! Had I been a few inches taller, I am sure I could have held my own with calmness, if not with dignity. As a matter of fact, I

was tortured with inward giggles of unadulterated nervousness, and shook like an aspen leaf.

"Peggie," began the trying creature, "what were you doing in that corridor last night? Good little girls should be asleep at midnight, not standing by open windows, trying to catch cold."

The brilliant idea forced itself into my brain to pretend I was a somnambulist; but, with his usual quick perception, the major must have read my very thoughts.

"You were not walking in your sleep," he continued; "your exit was too rapid to admit of such an idea!" I stood still as a statue, feeling a very Simple Simon of stupidity. "I have not told your father yet!" finished my tormentor.

Then, I found my voice. "Please, Major Savile, don't tell dad!" I implored.

His eyes twinkled with greater mischief than ever, and he calmly produced some tobacco, and rolled himself a cigarette. How I loathed him for his coolness! How was it my fearful agitation produced no corresponding effect on him?

"H'm! So, you were being a naughty little girl, and don't wish dad to know about it, eh?" He lighted up, and puffed out rings of smoke. "I'll tell you what it is, Peggie; confession being good for the soul, little girls can't expect to get into mischief, and get off scot free! Tell me what you were up to last night, and I'll do the scolding, and not tell your father. That's a fair bargain, isn't it?"

"What do you want to know for?" I blurted out, to give myself time.

"Women have not the sole monopoly of all the curiosity that abounds in the world, my child," he answered; "I confess you have aroused mine. But, of course, you needn't tell me if you don't like."

I pondered for a moment. Either I must grieve my dear old dad, or be a source of everlasting amusement to his tiresome friend; and I preferred the latter fate.

"I'll tell you," I said, with as much defiance as I could muster up, though I knew a very little would make me cry; "and I don't care a rap if you laugh at me or despise me for the rest of your life! Last night was All-hallows Eve, and—and Tom and Claude both wish to marry me, and I'm not quite sure which—which one I—like best! So, I remembered the old superstition of combing one's hair, and eating an apple before a mirror, at midnight."

There was a huge lump in my throat that got into my way when I was speaking, so I paused a moment. I wasn't looking at the major then, but, somehow, I knew he had stopped laughing.

"Well," he urged, "and what did you suppose would be the result of such a performance?"

"Oh—oh," I stuttered on, weakly, "then the face of one's future husband will appear in the glass, looking over one's shoulder!"

The confession was now a thing of the past, and, Dollie, you will never guess what followed! Without the least fraction of a warning, the major seized me in his arms, and gave me a kiss!

"Splendid, Peggie!" he cried, tightening his grip to put an end to my wriggles. "That is the only superstition I have ever heard of that I thoroughly believe in! What cute, far-seeing fairies they are of All-hallows Eve! Well, little girl, you'll like India very much, and I must say I am glad I haven't got to go back alone when my leave expires in three months' time!"

With a prodigious effort, I got away from him, and faced him, forgetful even of my crimson cheeks.

"What!—what—!" I began; then, words failed me, and I feebly lapsed into tears. Dollie, I can't tell you how sweet the major became!

"My little girl," he said, in the most angelic tones I have ever heard, "don't cry. You have lived in a curious chaos of doubts and bewilderment, and, as a last inspiration, you in-



voked the aid of All-hallows to show you, not so much your future husband as the state of your foolish little heart. You never cared for Tom or Claude, and I often longed to tell you so, but you would not have believed me if I had. Come, don't you think, after the revelation of last night, that I am the only man calculated to make you really happy?"

And, Dollie—oh, what a humiliating confession this would be to any one but you!—I whispered, "yes" to the top button of his dear old coat! So, now, for the last time, I demand your congratulations! I can't tell even you, dear, the lovely things the major—he says I must call him Eugene—said to me after this, but they weren't sentimental twaddle, like poor Claude's choicest phrases, or absolute nonsense, like the jabberings of Tom!

Dollie, what a blind, blind bat I have been all these months! How could I fancy myself in love with two such children, when I had him before my eyes? Dear old dad is absolutely beaming with happiness, and I have never seen anything approaching the glorious content in my Eugene's eyes! Gray eyes certainly beat all others for expression, don't they? And how could I think him old? Why, he is only three-and-twenty years older than I am, and what is that but just a suitable difference between husband and wife? Oh, Dollie, I am so happy—quite the happiest girl on the face of the earth this All Saints' Day! Darling, as my bridesmaid, you shall be dressed in white, with Eugene's

regimental colors! A military wedding is always delightful, isn't it? And I mustn't forget to tell Eugene to see that his sword is well sharpened to cut the wedding cake! I must really stop writing for the present; I wish to read up all the old newspapers on the Education Bill before dinner. And, of course, I shall study the Parliamentary news every day. It may be dry reading, but what wouldn't I do for my darling Eugene? Dollie, I am absolutely convinced you'll fall in love with him at first sight; I'm sure I did, though I wasn't aware I had until to-day! I could go on writing about him forever, but I must say good-bye! With lots of love, my dear old confidante,

Yours happily, thanks to All-hallows,

PEGGIE.

P. S.—Margaret Savile sounds nice and dignified, doesn't it? And isn't Mrs. Eugene Savile a lovely name?

Second P. S.—I feel just a wee bit sorry for Tom and Claude, don't you? And yet, really, it is the best thing that could have happened, for now they can go abroad together, and finish their educations, can't they? I must tell them when I see them again that it is absurd for them to have even dreamed of marrying for the next twenty years, and that I am much to blame for not having told them so before! Poor infants! By the way, Eugene's mustache is like the floss silk we embroider with. I do think a silky mustache is a great finish to a handsome man, don't you? Once more, farewell!



## EASILY ACCOUNTED FOR

FLORA—Why is Belle so cool toward you?

LAURA—My family tree threw hers into the shade.



IF there were only three women left in this world, two of them would go into a corner, and begin to talk about the other.

# AN ENIGMATICAL BEQUEST

By Henry Adelbert Thompson

“I THINK, Miss Randolph,” I remarked, as we seated ourselves in the spacious library of Mr. James Wycherly’s country home—a great, bleak, stone structure—“that it will be well, as preliminary to everything else, to comply with your uncle’s instructions relative to some papers left in our care. We must suppose that Mr. Wycherly had some purpose in view when he requested Mr. Moran and myself, immediately upon receiving news of his death, to repair to this place, and open and examine these documents. It is possible they contain detailed directions touching the place and manner of his burial, with which it would be advisable to acquaint ourselves.”

“My uncle told Mrs. Gardner,” replied the young lady, “that he desired to be interred in the forenoon of the day after to-morrow, at the head of Mungo Bay, just above tide-water. I should infer, therefore, that the papers you mention do not relate to such matters. However, though it seems somewhat premature at this time, I see no possible disrespect in complying with my uncle’s express command. What do you think, Mr. Moran?”

“That Mr. Wycherly’s wishes should take precedence of every other consideration,” replied my partner. “Let us at once examine the documents.”

I had been called from New York, that morning, by a telegram announcing the sudden death, during the previous night, of Mr. Wycherly. I now took from my hand-bag the packet belonging to our deceased client. Breaking the seals, I placed the various enclosures on a table, and inspected them

through my glasses. They were three in number—one a somewhat bulky parcel, which, on that account, I proceeded to open first. It proved to be the manuscript of a book, entitled, “In Strange Places,” and an accompanying note directed that it should be published after the author’s death. The second envelope contained Mr. Wycherly’s will, a very brief legal document, in which his entire estate was bequeathed to his only surviving relative, Miss Marian Randolph, subject to certain annuities to be paid to Mr. and Mrs. William Gardner, his servant and housekeeper, during their lifetime. On removing the outer wrapping of the third document, I found it to be a single sheet of paper, folded, sealed in several places along the overlapping edge, and bearing an indorsement on its back, which ran as follows:

“Should Miss Marian Randolph, the legatee mentioned in my will, inform you that she was present at my side an hour previous to my death, and that I was conscious and able to converse with her at the time, you will burn this paper unopened. I am apprehensive, however, that my decease may be sudden, and that my niece may not be able to reach me in time to receive my final instructions. In such case, you will, in accordance with our agreement, open this paper in Miss Randolph’s presence, as soon as possible after my demise; and you will give her such advice relative to its contents as may be in your power.”

I read this indorsement, first to myself and then aloud; and I saw my own suddenly awakened curiosity reflected on the faces of my companions.

“I suppose I had better open this,” I remarked.

“Undoubtedly,” said my partner,

"since Miss Randolph did not arrive in time."

With professional deliberation, I broke the seals, unfolded the paper, and glanced at its contents. At first, I thought my eyes had deceived me; and, when I made sure that this was not the case, my curiosity was succeeded by an amazement vastly more profound. And so I gazed blankly until an impatient "Well?" from Moran aroused me to the fact that my companions also were interested.

"Read it out, Mr. Hawley," said Miss Randolph.

"But—er—ah—er—" I spluttered, "this is nonsense—rank foolishness—and I cannot make head or tail of it."

"Still, read it out," suggested my partner; and, accordingly, I proceeded to read, with what declamatory emphasis I could command, the contents of the paper. The effect was all I could wish. Miss Randolph and Moran were equally astonished. This will readily be understood when I say that the carefully preserved and elaborately indorsed paper in my hand bore nothing on its face except four lines of halting and awkward verse, of which the following is a transcription:

"There's an isle of the sea which bears my  
name;  
And I hide in the desert whence I came.  
The bush that shades my lowly bed  
Has broken many a foolish head."

"Gracious!" cried Miss Randolph, "I knew my uncle was eccentric, but I never dreamed he was so bad as that."

"Let me see that paper, please," said Moran, hastily. Rising, he carried the page to the window, flattened it against the glass, and studied it, intently, for five minutes. Then, returning to his chair, he held it at arm's length before him, and slowly advanced it toward his eyes, until it was not six inches from the end of his nose. Again, thrusting the paper as far away as possible, he repeated this operation. The expression on his face was the same that I had often seen in court, when he was engaged in extracting information from a contumacious wit-

ness. But, soon, the alertness faded from his countenance, and was succeeded by that air of abstraction which characterized it when, in the office, some abstruse legal problem demanded attention.

I leaned back in my chair, and waited. Once or twice, noting that Miss Randolph was about to speak, I negatived her purpose by a movement of the head. So, for a quarter of an hour or more, we sat in silence; finally, my partner spoke.

"Miss Randolph," he said, coming out of his reverie and turning to our new client, "what can you tell us of your uncle's personal history? He spent most of his life abroad, did he not?"

"I fear," replied the girl, "that my information will prove very unsatisfactory. Mr. Wycherly invested a modest inheritance in enterprises which, resulting fortunately, made him a wealthy man before he was thirty years old. But, just at the time most men would have regarded themselves as well launched on a business career, my uncle, to the surprise of his friends, sold his stock in all speculative ventures, reinvested his capital in permanent securities, and became a traveler; the remainder of his life was spent in literally wandering over the entire face of the earth. I have heard my mother, who was his sister and only near relative, intimate that this was due to a sentimental disappointment, from the memory of which he desired to escape. My mother usually received letters from him twice a year; and these were dated in Siberia, Africa, Australia and almost every remote region of the globe. About six years ago, and quite unexpectedly to us, he returned to America. His unanticipated arrival was, however, fortunate, as my mother, who died only a month later, was thus enabled to see him again. His first act, after my mother's burial, was to purchase this estate, where he has since resided. He immediately felled all the trees, and transformed the house, originally a story-and-a-half stone structure with

wide verandas, into the architectural curiosity it now is. He added another story to the building, closed all the windows with iron shutters, tore down the porches, and erected on the roof the huge cupola you noticed as you came in. This is really a good-sized room, and has since been used by my uncle as a sleeping apartment, notwithstanding its inconvenience, as it can only be entered by a trap-door. The land has been allowed to go to waste, absolutely nothing, save a few shrubs, remaining of a once beautiful lawn and garden. My uncle had a marked distaste for society, and lived much as a recluse. It was one of his favorite sayings that he had encountered but two men who were not, in some way or degree, fools. One of these, if I remember rightly, was a Chinaman, and the other a Russian convict in Siberia."

"Did Mr. Wycherly's return from abroad afford you the opportunity of becoming tolerably well acquainted with him?" inquired my partner.

"Quite the contrary. My uncle was in the habit of asking me, perhaps once in a year, to spend a couple of days with him. Aside from these occasional visits, which were made from a sense of duty rather than from any anticipation of enjoyment, I saw little of him."

"This charade, cryptogram, poetical enigma, or whatever you may choose to call it," said Moran, reflectively, taking a final glance at the paper and passing it to the young lady, "may be merely nonsensical; but I am opposed to the hasty adoption of this theory, for every circumstance of the case seems to point to the conclusion that it is of unusual importance. I think I shall take a walk about the place, and see if solitary meditation will throw any light on the subject."

As may be inferred from the foregoing conversation, I am the senior, and Moran the junior, partner of the law firm of Hawley & Moran. Since Mr. Wycherly's return to the United States, we had acted as his attorneys, transacting the small amount of legal business which he required of

us. It was in this way we made the acquaintance of Miss Randolph. I may as well suggest, right here, that my partner was desperately in love with that young lady; but, apparently, his regard was not returned. They met often at the homes of mutual friends.

The only conventional thing about Moran was the cut of his clothes. There were more striking features, and perhaps contradictions, in my partner's face than in that of any man of my acquaintance. He had the forehead of a thinker, but his keen gray eyes were those of the alert lawyer whose reputation—and his was not inconsiderable—rested on his ability to probe the deepest recesses in the mind of a recalcitrant witness. His nose, though finely modeled, was very prominent; and nature had given him an enormous mouth, which an irreverent street gamin had once likened to that of a catfish. Opinion in regard to Moran's personal appearance differed widely, which is distinction enough for one person. I have heard my partner described as a man of grotesque ugliness, and as one of the handsomest men in New York. Unfortunately, in view of his feelings with regard to Miss Randolph, of which that young lady was probably unaware, save through conjecture, she did not seem to think him good-looking, and treated his attentions rather with amused or good-natured tolerance than with responsive interest. It was plain to me, and, I believe, to Moran also, that any progress he might hope to make in her affections must be through the demonstration of unusual qualities of mind and character.

Miss Randolph, on her part, was a striking contrast to my partner. She was a brunette of an imperial type, possessing regular features, a well-molded figure and pleasing manners; nor was she lacking in education or intellectual acumen. As we sat in the library, discussing the possible significance of Mr. Wycherly's bit of versification, I could not help approving Moran's infatuation and sincerely

hoping that he would ultimately be successful in winning the girl.

That absurd quatrain, however, baffled me completely. I read it over a score of times, as did Miss Randolph, but no faintest gleam illumined the meaning of the lines. Finally, we turned to a consideration of the arrangements for Mr. Wycherly's funeral, and decided to have, in accordance with his wishes, a very simple service, at ten o'clock in the morning of the second following day.

It was after dark, and dinner had been served, before Moran came in. I saw, at a glance, that he had not found the solution of the enigma. Our conversation at the table was desultory; and, though it was mentioned once or twice, my partner made no remarks on the topic that was uppermost in our minds. After dinner, he ensconced himself in one of the big reading-chairs, and proceeded, with our client's permission, to examine the manuscript of Mr. Wycherly's book. When I retired at midnight, he was still engaged in leafing the pages; and, when I descended in the morning, I found him comfortably sleeping on the great leather couch in the library, with the manuscript lying on the floor beside him. He awoke at my entrance, gathered up the loose sheets, placed them on the table, and went up-stairs to make his toilette. When he reappeared, twenty minutes later, he was fresh and unfatigued, and I noticed that the alert expression had returned to his face.

"I should like," said my partner, at the breakfast-table, addressing the remark to our hostess, "to inspect the room on the roof."

"May we accompany you?" I asked.

"Certainly; it is what I would wish."

Accordingly, we climbed the stairs, and stood in the roof apartment with which Mr. Wycherly had capped his dwelling. It was a four-square room, oriented and with a window opening in each direction. The furnishing was meager. An iron bedstead, a dressing-case, a washstand and a couple of chairs were the only articles of utility,

and there were practically no adornments, unless the numerous firearms, hanging on the walls or standing in the corners, could be thus designated. Some of these guns were merely antiques, more curious than useful, but others were of the latest pattern. It was the collection of a man with a fancy for weapons of this description. Moran picked up first a rifle and then a shotgun, and, finding both of them loaded, put them back in their places without remark. His attention seemed to fix itself, for a few moments, upon a box of shotgun shells, which stood open upon a shelf; and, taking up one or two of the cartridges, he examined them intently and thrust them into his pocket. It seemed to me that my partner's actions were those of a searcher at fault. Almost mechanically, he opened and closed the drawers of the dresser, tapped on the foot of the bedstead, and sounded the walls in several places with his knuckles. Presently, his gaze wandered to the windows. At the one which opened toward the sea, he remained not more than a couple of minutes. His inspection of the landscape from the east window, which overlooked a far stretch of beach, was much more prolonged but evidently unsatisfactory. Finally, he shifted his position to the north window; and Miss Randolph and I, seeing that the waiting was likely to be long, sat down. Ten minutes passed, and fifteen, and twenty. Then, suddenly, Moran's attitude became rigid and intense, and I was aware that he had made some discovery. It was with difficulty that I restrained my impatience, and kept my chair; but I managed to do so and also to signal Miss Randolph not to rise. I knew my partner would not welcome an interruption at such a time.

"By Jove!" said Moran, half to himself, "it's the most singular thing I ever saw in my life." Then, turning, he dashed unceremoniously down the stairway, leaving us staring at each other. Together, we rushed to the window. There was absolutely noth-



ing to be seen except a two-horse farm wagon crawling along the highway which, a quarter of a mile away, bordered the estate. The blankness of my face was reflected in that of my companion. In a short time, as we still stood at the window, we saw Moran walking leisurely away from the house, with the air of one who has unlimited time at his disposal, and is at a loss just how to occupy it. He carried a small stick with which he struck carelessly at the tops of the stray weeds and bushes. Halting occasionally, he gazed about him, his attitude being that of one examining the distant features of an unfamiliar and perhaps disappointing landscape. In this slow, sauntering fashion, he traversed about half the distance between the house and the road; then he turned to the right, and, on reaching the driveway on that side, began to retrace his steps.

"That partner of yours is the queerest fellow I ever saw," remarked Miss Randolph, with an amused glance at me.

"Yes," I replied, "he is queer; but there is usually method in his madness. I know that he has a wonderful faculty for the solution of legal perplexities; and I shall be much surprised if he fails to bring something out of this tangle."

"Oh," said the lady, a trifle mischievously, "I do not dispute Mr. Moran's strong individuality, but I doubt his ability to penetrate the meaning of what seems to me an insane joke."

"The point of the argument is that my partner does not consider your uncle's enigma the product of an unbalanced mind. He evidently regards it as something worth looking into carefully, and proposes to solve its mysteries."

"If he does solve it," responded Miss Randolph, thoughtfully, "I shall think him a man of remarkable powers."

It was doubtless our curiosity which led us out of doors almost as soon as we descended from the room

on the roof. We found Moran at the stables, in close consultation with William Gardner. He pointed, when we appeared, in the direction of the beach, and we had gone but a couple of hundred yards when he overtook us.

"Hawley," he said, as we strode along with the hard sand under our feet, "Miss Randolph is our client, and must obey instructions, or have us resign her case. You, however, are my partner, and have a right to demand explanations, and to protest if my views do not meet your approval. But the case is a little out of the ordinary, and——"

"I should say, Mr. Moran," interrupted the girl, nettled by the brusque treatment of her possible views, "that, if the case is only a little out of the ordinary, your treatment of it and of those concerned in it is quite unusual, perhaps bordering upon melodrama."

"I am going to make a somewhat strange request," continued my partner, apparently ignoring the caustic criticism; "it is that you and Miss Randolph will, for the next twenty-four hours, do exactly as I say."

"Provided your commands are reasonable," I interposed.

"That is understood. I shall ask you to await the revelation of the plan of campaign until to-night. Miss Randolph, you can make this estate a model Summer resort."

Moran continued to direct the conversation in channels foreign to the enigma. After dinner that evening, he and Miss Randolph seated themselves in one corner of the library, and began a chat which lasted several hours. I occupied myself with Mr. Wycherly's books, but occasionally cast a glance in the direction of my interested companions. It was evident that my partner was making the best of his opportunities, and the girl seemed to be showing no resentment for his cavalier treatment of her in the morning. On the contrary, she gave his remarks a respectful attention such as Moran had not before won from her.

About half-past ten o'clock, William Gardner entered, apparently by appointment, and announced to my legal associate that a pick and spade were outside. Moran arose and disappeared up-stairs. In a few moments, he returned, bearing a rifle, a shotgun and four revolvers, which he had taken from Mr. Wycherly's collection.

"I have concluded," said the young man, "that a treasure hidden by our late client is concealed outside the house, the directions for finding which he embodied in that quatrain we read yesterday afternoon. Further, the utmost secrecy is essential in all attempts at its recovery. I shall therefore request you both to remain in the house while Gardner and I make the search."

"Indeed, Mr. Moran," broke in the girl, in a very decided tone, "if you are going out to unearth a mystery, or to find a treasure hidden by my uncle, I must insist that you take me along, and tell me the line you are following."

"My dear Miss Randolph," responded my partner, with no less determination, "I should prefer to work alone until I have demonstrated my reasoning to be true or false. I am perfectly willing to take all the risks which may attach to the discovery of the valuables in question, but I decline most definitely, under any circumstances whatever, to expose you to the same danger. Either you will remain in the house in company with Mr. Hawley or Gardner, or I drop the matter right here."

I thought these proceedings somewhat high-handed, and was about to say as much when the girl forestalled me.

"You would seem, Mr. Moran," she remarked, "to infer the presence of others who are also looking for my uncle's possessions; what possible reason can you have for such a suspicion?"

"I am sure there are others," replied my partner. "Everything connected with this remarkable case

cries caution. At the proper time, I shall fully acquaint you with my reasons for desiring you to remain in a safe place during this night."

After some discussion, it was decided that the servant should be left on guard in the house, while I accompanied Moran outside.

"Here, Gardner, are a shotgun and a revolver," said the leader of the expedition, presenting the weapons. "You will remain with Miss Randolph, and on no account admit any one except Mr. Hawley and myself. I do not anticipate that we shall be gone long."

I was instructed to carry a rifle, and to place a revolver in my pocket, while Moran armed himself with a brace of large six-shooters. I felt like a fool, strolling over the estate at that hour of the night and accoutred as a walking arsenal. I began to think that, in spite of the usual strong sense displayed by my friend, he had imbibed some of the old traveler's eccentricity. He, however, seemed to have a very definite purpose in view. Leading the way directly toward the centre of what had been the lawn, and halting by a small bush, about half the distance from the house to the public highway fronting the estate, he began to dig. Enjoining upon me a strict watchfulness, and cautioning me not to speak above a whisper, Moran worked with silent but nervous energy. Every few minutes, he would pause, straighten up and look cautiously about him. Then, he would listen intently for any unusual sound. In this way, alternately scouting and digging, he excavated a hole some three feet in diameter by two in depth. A smothered exclamation and the ring of the pick on some metallic substance quickened my curiosity. Moran, after planting a few careful strokes, took the spade, and quietly scraped the earth from the lid of a small, iron-bound chest, which was not more than a foot square. Then, he stopped, strolled about the vicinity a few minutes,

looking keenly in the uncertain light for signs of intruders, returned, and proceeded to exhume the box.

"Is it heavy?" I asked, in a low tone, as he lifted it from the hole, and deposited it beside me.

"No, not very."

Then, my singular associate shoveled the dirt back into the excavation, smoothed over the mound, and stamped it down firmly, replacing the sods with care, in order to obliterate, as far as possible, all traces of the work.

"Now, come," he commanded, shouldering the box, "and look sharp."

Arrived at the house, he knocked softly, and replied to Gardner's questions as to our identity. The chest was placed on the library table, the hinges were pried off with a chisel, and the lid thrown back. Moran, earlier in the evening, had closed and locked every shutter on the building, and had drawn all the curtains tightly. We were on the *qui vive* as he exposed the interior of the case, and I, for one, expected to see ingots of precious metals, or bags of coin. We saw, however, an inner box of zinc, the seams of which were soldered together, apparently to prevent the entrance of moisture. The chisel soon cut away the upper sheet of the zinc, and revealed a mass of felt packing. Moran fumbled about in this, taking out handfuls of the stuff, and, at last, when the tension was becoming almost unbearable, he extracted a small leathern jewel-case. Motioning us to approach, he advanced closer to the hanging lamp, and slowly opened the little case. Then, in the glow of the light, he held up a wonderful green stone, large as a hickory nut. It was a gem of indescribable magnificence, the like of which I had never seen. At one moment, it was green with the fresh color of a meadow in Spring, and the next, at a different angle, it was green with the shifting tints of the sea. Sometimes, as my partner turned it between his fingers, it seemed to pale and fade;

but the next instant, catching the light again, it flashed out into a great and bewildering beauty.

"Oh," cried Miss Randolph, in great delight, "what a wonderful gem!"

"I should say," remarked Moran, "that it is one of the largest and most valuable emeralds in the world. I am not able to say whether its worth is lessened or enhanced by the strange characters which are engraved on this broad facet."

"Where did you find it?" asked our client, as she took the stone.

"And how did you solve the enigma?" I put in.

"Sit down, and I will tell you," rejoined my partner, dropping into a big chair.

"The moment I glanced at that strange paper," began the successful analyst, "I knew Mr. Wycherly had hidden something, and that the document in our hands contained directions for finding it. Of course, the suggestion in the first line, touching the character of the concealed article, was so obvious as to require very little consideration."

"I understand it very clearly, now," said Miss Randolph; "but it did not occur to me until I saw the emerald."

"That was probably because, instead of holding yourself to the first line until you had determined its meaning, you allowed your mind to be drawn away to deserts and bushes."

"As I remember it, now," replied the girl, "the idea of desert was uppermost in my thoughts."

"And in mine, also," I commented.

"But that was getting ahead of your subject," responded my partner. "It was only after I had satisfied myself that the hidden article was, in all probability, a valuable emerald, that I turned my attention to the second, and really puzzling, feature of the case—the determination of the place in which it was concealed. Touching this question, the suggestions contained in the enigma are vague and elusive. The close association between the ideas of desert and sand led me to the beach, in the hope I might there

stumble upon some clue; but I returned no wiser than I went. I then devoted myself to an examination of Mr. Wycherly's manuscript book, thinking that something in its pages might illumine the situation. My discoveries were unimportant, though not entirely uninteresting. I found, for example, that the author was a fancier of precious stones, for his narrative embodies minute descriptions of several famous gems and talismanic charms which have passed under his observation. This served to confirm me in the conviction that the article Mr. Wycherly had hidden was an emerald; but the three remaining lines of the enigma were still as mysterious as ever."

"And I hide in the desert whence I came," I quoted. "It seems to me that this line is not only elusive, but absolutely misleading, as directing attention to a territory very distant from here."

"It was a point which furnished me food for thought," answered Moran; "but the theory that we were to go looking on the other side of the world for the emerald was contradicted by every other indication entering into the case. In spite of the plain reading of the line, it was obvious that the gem was hidden somewhere on the estate."

"But I do not perceive any indications, aside from those contained in the paper," interrupted Miss Randolph.

"Why," returned Moran, "every feature of this place points to the conclusion that its owner held in possession something of which he was in mortal dread of being robbed. Mr. Wycherly, after his purchase of the old farmhouse, tore down the verandas, that the blank walls might be more troublesome to scale; he built another story, that the increased altitude might add to the difficulty; he secured every window in the house with solid shutters; and he constructed for his own use an apartment so situated and defended that access to it, with unfriendly intent, was practically impossible. These alterations were all

in the line of converting the structure into a sort of fortress; and this is saying nothing of the fact that the estate was patrolled by a pack of ferocious dogs, which Gardner has kept chained up since our arrival; but I have instructed him to loose them to-night."

"And yet," I broke in, "the well-known eccentricity of Mr. Wycherly might easily account for all these proceedings. They were no more whimsical than his fancy for cutting down the trees, and denuding the estate of its bushes."

"To my mind," replied Moran, gravely, "nothing could be more impressive as suggesting the systematic and thoughtful character of Mr. Wycherly's precautions. He not only secured himself in a fortress, but, like a skilful general, he cleared the land about him, that he might more certainly detect the approach of an enemy. His expedients were extraordinary throughout; and they were all directed to the one end of guarding the room on top of the house."

"But the emerald was not there, after all," cried the girl.

"All my inferences led to the conclusion that it was," said my partner, "until I actually entered the room, when I soon found there was a flaw in my reasoning, for I was able to discover nothing which seemed to be in correspondence with the idea of a desert. So great was my disappointment that I was on the point of resigning further effort; and it was only casually that I proceeded to examine the estate from the windows, thereby chancing upon the observation which cleared up the case."

"Whatever it was you saw," I said, "must have taken to itself wings during the interval occupied by Miss Randolph and myself in getting to the window, for nothing unusual presented itself to us."

"You must blame your own eyes for that. And yet it is by no means so easy a thing to see that you need despair of your optical powers. The difficulty lies in the fact that it is so obvious, covering, as it does, the



whole foreground of the landscape presented from the window. You recall, of course, that there are two winding and rather widely divergent driveways leading from the entrance in the highway to the door of the house?"

"Undoubtedly."

"But you failed to observe that these driveways trace, on that portion of the estate, an exact outline of the continent of Africa."

"What!" I exclaimed; "the continent of Africa! I recall the fact that those roadways are peculiarly laid out, and seem to make quite unnecessary turns; but it did not strike me that this was for the purpose of giving an exact configuration to the enclosed territory."

"Such, however, is the case," said Moran. "And this peculiarity is observable only from the north window of the roof room. It is quite impossible, owing to certain inequalities of the ground, for one on the surface to detect it."

"And there are deserts in Africa?" ventured the girl.

"Yes; preëminently that of Sahara."

"And the emerald was hidden in that portion of the landscape map which corresponds with that desert, its location indicated by a bush?"

"Precisely. Your uncle, in stripping the estate of its vegetation, spared a few straggling bushes, most of them so dwarfed and scanty of foliage as to afford no shelter to any one approaching the house. There are three shrubs growing in the territory which I took to indicate the Sahara. On examination, I at once understood the last line of the enigma."

"I am still in the dark," said Miss Randolph.

"You will not be when I tell you that one of those bushes is an Irish blackthorn; or, in other words, the shrub which furnishes the shillalah."

"But why, Mr. Moran, did you not announce these discoveries, and allow me to be present at the finding of the emerald?"

"Because I was afraid," he answered,

glancing half-apprehensively over his shoulder.

"Afraid?"

"Is my story, Miss Randolph, so far as I have related it, satisfactory to your mind?"

"Perfectly."

"I wish I could say as much for myself," remarked my partner.

"It appears to me," I said, "that your success furnishes absolutely conclusive proof of the correctness of your reasoning."

"But do you not see," he cried, "that there are many strange circumstances in this case, for which we have not yet accounted? Indeed, I have not mentioned its really puzzling and impressive features."

We stared into vacancy, and awaited an explanation of this statement.

"Mr. James Wycherly," continued Moran, slowly, as though reasoning the matter out as he went along, "came into possession of what is probably one of the most valuable emeralds in the world. It is only necessary to look at that stone in order to realize that it is worth an immense amount of money. Possibly, he conceived the notion that, in addition to its intrinsic value, the gem was endowed with some talismanic properties; though this is merely conjecture, based upon some hints in his book and upon the fact that the stone is curiously engraved on the broadest of its facets. But, however this may have been, Mr. Wycherly resolved to hold it at all hazards and against all comers, and so resorted to the most extraordinary precautions to insure the safety of his treasure. These were one and all directed to the end of guarding a certain room at the upper part of the house, leading to the logical conclusion that he kept the emerald in that unique apartment. But, just at this point, we come face to face with the contradictory fact that the gem was not in that room, nor, indeed, in the house, but in an exposed spot on the estate, and at a considerable distance from the residence of the owner. From these



circumstances, we may draw several interesting inferences."

"That my uncle's eccentricity amounted, in some lines, almost to insanity?" suggested Miss Randolph.

"On the contrary, Mr. Wycherly was not only sane, but a genius in the art of concealment. When I speak of the hiding-place of the emerald as exposed, I do not imply that it was unsafe. The wisdom of its selection is shown by the fact that it was not discovered until sought for by one who possessed directions for finding it."

"And you imagine that there are others engaged in looking for it?" I questioned.

"I am quite certain of that," replied my partner. "I am also convinced that Mr. Wycherly knew who they were, and was aware of the fact that they were trying to get possession of his treasure. It is impossible, on any other theory, to account for the measures he adopted. The unprecedented nature of his precautions differentiates them widely from those usually employed in guarding against thieves. Mr. Wycherly, after depositing that emerald in a place which would naturally be regarded as the very last he would select, elaborately barricaded his house. The only possible inference is that this was for the double purpose of diverting attention from the place in which the gem was really hidden, and of providing for his personal security. In other words, he anticipated danger from a particular quarter; and we may reasonably suppose that he was acquainted with those who represented this danger, for he undoubtedly respected their intelligence, and feared their power."

"I should not be surprised," I said, facetiously, "to hear you name the parties."

"It might be possible to discover their names, if necessary," he replied, gravely enough. "At present, it is sufficient to say those whom Mr. Wycherly feared were foreigners, and probably Orientals. I base this conclusion on the fact that his enigma could only be solved by one who possessed famili-

arity with certain things quite unknown outside the boundaries of western Europe and North America. Take, for example, the correspondence between Ireland and emerald, and that between the blackthorn and the breaking of heads. These—while perfectly familiar to one who knows the English language, or who is acquainted with a peculiarly Hibernian custom—would be absolutely unintelligible to those not thus equipped. We may presume that it was Mr. Wycherly's purpose to frame such instructions as would be comprehensible only to those for whom they were intended, which, should the paper containing them be lost or mislaid, would still puzzle and bewilder his enemies to the greatest possible extent. I infer, therefore, that those whom he feared were Asiatics or Africans, rather than Europeans or Americans."

"Moran," I interrupted, "this is very plausible theorizing; but, after all, it is likely that the pursuers of whom you speak were merely phantoms of Mr. Wycherly's brain or yours. Have you any actual proof of their existence?"

"I must admit," he answered, smiling a little at my incredulity, "that I have not. They are just logical possibilities in the case. I am attempting to materialize them by constructing, on the basis of the information at my disposal, a supposititious history of our client's connection with that emerald. Let us consider another phase of the situation. We know that Mr. Wycherly's fortune was by no means unlimited; and it is, therefore, probable that he purchased the gem at much less than its real value. Either he bought it in some out-of-the-way corner of the earth, where its worth was unappreciated, or it was sold to him by one who had good reasons for parting with it at a price much less than its actual value. As the intrinsic worth of a great gem is as well known in a Bedouin encampment as in London, the second of these hypotheses is the more tenable."

"But why should the original owner of the stone sacrifice it to my uncle?" asked Miss Randolph.

"In Mr. Wycherly's case," rejoined Moran, "we know that the possession of the emerald was attended by a great fear; and why should we not assume the same was true in the former instance? The origin of this fear is involved in mystery, but the most obvious explanation is that the ownership of the gem was in dispute. It was probably a stolen jewel which your uncle purchased, and the apprehension associated with it arose from the suspicion, or perhaps the actual knowledge, that the real owner was bent on reclaiming it. The identity of this original owner we have, at present, no means of determining; but there can be no doubt that, by those who had reason to fear his resources, he was regarded as formidable."

"But can you imagine," asked the girl, "why my uncle clung so tenaciously to something, the possession of which was attended by such uncomfortable anticipations? Why, following the example of the man who sold the gem to him, did he not dispose of it, and thus divert any threatening danger? Or, if determined to retain it, why did he not simply commit its keeping to the professional guardians of valuables?"

"Now," said my partner, "you are asking me to explain the vagaries of an admittedly eccentric mind. Your relative may have purchased that stone, knowing it had been stolen and accepting the risks, or, and more likely, he may have become aware of its true history only after the bargain was concluded. In either case, he probably found no difficulty in persuading himself that, having bought and paid for the gem, he was its rightful owner, and the attempt to deprive him of it was little better than robbery. It is my opinion that it became a matter of pride with Mr. Wycherly that the attempt should not succeed. He determined to show his pursuers that he could outwit them; and in this contest for possession of the emerald he perhaps found the excitement and diversion of thought which he previously sought in travel and

adventure. Had he placed his treasure in the care of a safe-deposit company, the whole situation would have been reduced to the level of the commonplace, without in the least diminishing his personal danger. So long as he was *de facto* proprietor, it was necessary for him to play the game of defense, and it interested him to make the stakes as high as possible."

"It occurs to me, however," I interposed, "that there is an unaccountable oversight, which may lie either in Mr. Wycherly's reasoning or your own. If he was aware that danger attended the possession of that gem, why did he not suggest this in the paper which contained instructions for finding it?"

"Probably he regarded it as unnecessary in a case whose every circumstance was in the nature of a caution. Had his anticipation of sudden death by violence been fulfilled, the warning would have been still more strikingly evident. Even as it is, everything about this homestead cries so loudly of danger that I think it wise for us to take the utmost care to guard our find."

"What would you suggest?" inquired Miss Randolph.

"To-morrow morning, I shall take the early train for New York. If there are persons keeping us under surveillance, they will naturally conclude that the emerald is in my possession, and that I am hurrying to the city to deposit it in a safe place. I shall proceed to the Metropolitan Trust Company's building, call for my deposit box, and place something in it. You, however, will keep the stone, and bring it with you to the city, after the burial of your uncle. I must urgently insist that Mr. Hawley shall go armed to the funeral, and that he will not allow you out of his sight or away from his protection until you have placed your treasure behind steel walls."

"I think, Mr. Moran," said Miss Randolph, with a smile, "that the eeriness of my uncle's fantasies has somewhat affected you. I am tired with the long day and the excitement

we have been through, and will now retire. Let me say, however," she graciously added, "that I consider your tracing of the very obscure directions given in that enigma to be one of the most remarkable exhibitions of inductive reasoning I have ever known, and I thank you most sincerely for the courage and skill you have displayed in my interest."

"Old fellow," I remarked, after the girl had bidden us good night, "I don't much believe in your Orientals, but I do believe you have made a long stride in the good graces of a certain young lady."

"I will not conceal from you, Hawley," he replied, "that I have been stimulated in this search by something more than mere professional duty and interest. You might examine that, though," he continued, taking a shot-gun shell from his pocket and rolling it across the table; "I found it in Wycherly's sleeping-room. You can tell me whether, in your opinion, the eccentricity of our deceased client went the length of using such ammunition on the beach birds."

I cut the shell open with my pen-knife, and a heavy charge of buckshot tumbled out on the table.

"I think you have established the fact that Wycherly was morbidly afraid of losing his treasure, and that he fancied the existence of enemies bent on taking it away from him; but, to my mind, you have quite failed to show that the pursuers, of whom you speak so confidently, are not merely figments of the imagination."

"Very possibly, the Orientals are creatures of my own brain," replied my partner, good-naturedly; "but those figments of my imagination will cost me a night's sleep, since I shall remain up and keep guard. You had better go up-stairs, and get some rest."

Moran left according to schedule, next morning. The burial of James Wycherly, which occurred at ten o'clock in the forenoon, was simple in the extreme. A clergyman, from a hamlet farther along the shore, read the service, while I stood with bared

head at the grave, and Miss Randolph and the two old servants wept silently. Then, as soon as the horses could be put in, we drove away, reaching the station at Tuckahoe in time for the twelve-forty train. I don't know just why I obeyed my junior partner's instructions to carry a revolver, since I was in no sympathy with what seemed to me a morbid fear of his; yet, I retained in my hip-pocket, from the time Moran thrust it there in the morning until safe in my own office in the city, a heavy-calibre six-shooter which had belonged to our deceased client. Miss Randolph rallied me about it several times during the day. As we left the station, on arrival in the city, I was about to put my young client in a cab and accompany her to the Safe Deposit Company, as Moran had directed.

"Now, Mr. Hawley," she interposed, "you have kindly devoted a great deal of valuable time to my affairs, and I do not feel justified in allowing you to take the trouble of going with me to the Metropolitan Trust for a mere whim of your talented, but nervous, partner. I can have the cabman drive right to their building, and can stop in and deposit the gem. It is out of your way. No harm can befall me in the main thoroughfares of New York. Please do not bother to go with me, for I know you have matters at your office which are more urgent than this."

"I have some affairs with which I am anxious to get in touch," I replied. "I see no harm in allowing you to drive to the Metropolitan Trust Company's offices in broad daylight, notwithstanding the fuss Moran made about caution."

I gave the cab-driver the address, bade good-bye to Miss Randolph, and boarded an up-town car. At the office, I was told that Moran had gone to his rooms to get some sleep, and that he would meet me, for seven-o'clock dinner, at the English Bachelors' Club. Promptly on the hour, I entered the grill-room of the club, and found my partner awaiting me.

"Did Miss Randolph put that find in a safe place?" he inquired.

"I placed her in a cab at the ferry station, and she said she would drive at once to the Deposit Company's office, and put it in the box."

"I wish you had accompanied her," he answered; "I should feel more at ease. Still, we have heard nothing since, so I suppose she arrived all right."

"Pshaw! old fellow," I ejaculated, "you're making a mountain out of a mole-hill. There is no danger of any one following the girl up and taking that gem away from her. I don't know what got into you out at that country place."

"I'm half-famished; let's have something to eat," was all the reply vouchsafed me.

After dinner, Moran proposed that we go to the opera. Melba was singing in Wagner rôles, and I was not loath to accompany him. The somewhat exciting and fatiguing strain of the Wycherly case had put us both in a mood to relax and to enjoy the superb music.

"Wagner always makes me feel the smallness and pettiness of ordinary life," quoth my partner as, about eleven o'clock, we left the theatre and strolled down the street.

I was about to reply, when Fred Markland, a friend of Moran's, approached and accosted my companion.

"By Jove, old fellow, that was fine detective work you did in the Wycherly emerald matter. I congratulate you," he said.

"How did you learn of it?"

"Miss Randolph told me. She had a lot of nice things to say about you, also. My sister and I called over there early this evening—we are near neighbors, you know—and Miss Randolph showed us the emerald. It is the most——"

"Showed you the emerald!" echoed Moran. I thought his tone angry.

"Yes. I insisted on her going over to my home and exhibiting the gem to my family."

"Did she do so?"

"Certainly. We were all amazed at the unusual precautions her crazy old uncle took to conceal the treasure,

and all equally amazed that you solved the riddle. You'll be quite famous, Moran, if you keep up that sort of thing. And," he added, mischievously, "you will capture the lady, also, if you persist; she thinks there is no one like Aleck Moran."

"Markland," interrupted my partner, with intense earnestness, "I shall be greatly indebted to you, if you will avoid mentioning to any one whomsoever the existence of that stone until I give you permission and until I can explain this request. Will you promise?"

"Why—why—of course—if you wish it—but——"

"I have ample reasons for asking you to keep quiet. And now I must bid you a hasty good evening, as I have an important matter on hand. Come on, Hawley."

"I am going straight to Miss Randolph's house," he continued, as soon as Markland was out of hearing, "and get that treasure from that foolish girl. Then, I shall place it in our office safe, and stand guard over it to-night. If Miss Randolph refuses to let me have it, I shall have to police the house, I suppose. You must come with me, as it is not safe for one man to carry the thing alone."

"Now, look here, Aleck Moran," I sputtered, "what in the nation has got into you? If you think a respectable, elderly widower like myself is going to put in the night mooning about the mansion of a girl, you are mightily mistaken. You may do so, if you wish, but I'm going to my apartments and to bed."

"Hawley, I tell you there is not a moment to be lost. You simply must come with me." With that, he hailed a passing cab, and, before I quite realized his purpose, hustled me inside, entered himself, gave the address to the driver, and we rolled rapidly away. Miss Randolph, who was an orphan, lived with a semi-invalid aunt of hers on West Sixty-third street. As we bowled along up-town, I expostulated with my partner. He seemed chagrined that I did not have a revolver, and



informed me that his was safely bestowed in his pocket. On reaching our destination, Moran carefully reconnoitered the place before entering. It was an old residence, located back from the street and fronted by a deep and well-shaded lawn. As we advanced toward the door, my companion halted me, and disappeared around the side of the house. Two minutes later, he was back at my side.

"As I feared," he whispered; "they are trying to force an entrance. Luckily, you have a good cane. Come!"

Utterly bewildered, I followed him quietly to the rear corner of the building, and there saw, at one of the back windows, a man silently attempting to open the sash. Moran dashed forward, presenting his pistol, and called out to the man to surrender. The fellow leaped to the ground at once, and ran. At the same instant, a second burglar plunged out of the bushes near my reckless associate. I saw the gleam of a knife, and sprang, with cane uplifted, to avert the thrust. But I was too late; Moran fell at the blow, firing as he dropped, and bringing down his assailant. Hearing the other scoundrel crashing away in the shrubbery, I bent over my fallen friend, raised him and essayed to discover the extent of his injuries. He was on his feet in a moment, but staggered, and would again have fallen had he not been supported. The knife had entered his back below the ribs.

Of course, the shot attracted the attention of the people in the house, and lights speedily appeared. Simultaneously, three policemen came up. They sent in a call for the patrol-wagon, and one stood guard over the prostrate burglar while another assisted me to carry my partner upon the veranda and thence into the house, the door of which was opened by Miss Randolph herself.

"Oh, Mr. Hawley!" she cried; "what has happened?"

"The Orientals have tracked you, and were trying to enter your home.

I fear they have seriously injured Mr. Moran."

"Carry him right in, and I will telephone for a doctor, at once. Why was he here?"

"He learned that you had failed to do as he asked, and came here at once. The burglars were trying to get in at the rear of the house when we attacked them. One cut Moran, and was shot in doing so. The other escaped. I cannot clear myself of responsibility for his injury, as I should have accompanied you to the Trust Company's building this afternoon."

Meanwhile, my partner was placed on a bed, and we were doing what we could to stanch the flow of blood. The stab was more of a long slash than a deep cut, but the patient was unconscious. The doctor arrived in a few minutes, and took several stitches in the gash. He pronounced it nothing dangerous, but said the wounded man would have to remain in bed several days. If the knife had penetrated a little deeper, I might have lost my best friend and associate.

We know what a woman can do when there is sickness or accident to be attended to. Certainly, no one could have been nursed with more assiduity or tenderness than was my partner during the ensuing week. Several times, I caught Miss Randolph calling him "Aleck," and him addressing her as "Marian."

Ten days later, Moran, pale and a bit shaky still, accompanied me to the prisoners' ward of the city hospital, where we interviewed the victim of his bullet, who was slowly recovering from a perforating wound in the left lung. I give his history of the Wycherly emerald, omitting the odd dialect in which he mangled English.

"The Talisman of Suleyman the Wise has been in the family of my master, the Bey of Moorzook, for eight centuries. Seven years ago, it was stolen by an officer of the Bey's guards, who wished revenge upon my master for a reproof he had



received in consequence of neglect of duty. We followed this officer some six months, and finally discovered that he had sold the gem, for fifteen thousand dollars, to a foreigner by the name of Wycherly. We planned to kidnap Wycherly, and secure the emerald, or force him to surrender it. The plan failed, as Wycherly was a dead shot with any firearm, and he dropped three of the attacking party and drove off the others. Then, the American was reported to have sworn that, so long as he lived, the Bey should never have the gem. If the Bey had approached him in a decent way, so Wycherly said, and offered to pay back the money he had expended, he would have given it up without any hesitation. We soon lost track of Wycherly, and I think he left the country in disguise. But, at last, one of our agents reported that a man answering his description had taken ship at Malta. We traced him to Liverpool and thence to this country. I met him in New York, shortly after our arrival here, and the recognition was mutual. There was no chance to touch him that time, and no other opportunity occurred. He barricaded his house in the country, and baffled us at every turn. We were sure he kept the talisman in a room at the top of the house. Even in his absence, however, the place was overrun with a pack of big dogs, and Wycherly's servant never left the house when his master was away. Time and again, we tried to effect an entrance, but were always detected. When Wycherly died, we were not watching the place. The day after you left New York, we learned the truth and followed you down there and traced you back the morning you left so hurriedly. We thought you had the gem, but could get no chance at you. One of our number, however, who was keeping the Randolph house under surveillance, saw, through a window where the shade was slightly raised, Miss Randolph display the emerald to her friends. The rest you know."

"But why should your Bey spend twice the value of the emerald, as he certainly has done?" questioned Moran.

"The Talisman of Suleyman the Wise is priceless!" cried the robber, excitedly. "There are many emeralds like it, but they were not engraved by the great Suleyman, nor endowed with such powers. My master would spend his entire fortune in securing the gem. And we will secure it yet! You may slay, or imprison, me and others who will follow me, but, some day, the talisman will go back to the ruler of Moorzook."

"My dear sir," replied my partner, "I have a fair proposition to make you. If you, or your Bey, will pay us the fifteen thousand dollars which Mr. Wycherly innocently gave for the gem, we will turn it over to you and drop all prosecution of the case. Had you not attempted the life of Mr. Wycherly, and tried to kill me, you should have the emerald without payment. If you refuse this offer, we will send you to prison, and follow your companions until they are with you or are forced to leave the country. The emerald we will place where a dozen Beys cannot get it. What do you say?"

The dark, shrewd, forceful man on the hospital cot studied a moment, and then replied.

"If you will allow me to communicate with my companions, I shall have the money in two days. But you must swear that you will not interfere with them, nor betray me."

Two days later, the Talisman of Suleyman the Wise passed into the keeping of the African Bey, and fifteen thousand dollars in good American gold was placed to the credit of the estate of James Wycherly, deceased.

I dined with the Morans a few days since. I often dine with them, and they are very good to a lone lawyer of middle-age. I asked Mrs. Moran when she first began to love her husband.

"Mr. Hawley, you can ask me that question, since I look upon you as a second father. I first began to love him the day he 'bossed' me at the home of my uncle, Mr. James Wych-  
erly. And I loved him completely when he fought for my safety, the night the agents of a certain Bey attempted to steal the Talisman of Suleyman the Wise."



### WHAT NORA SAID

WHAT Nora said she whispered low,  
Amid the twilight's amber glow;  
When all we prize grows yet more dear,  
And trembling love contends with fear  
Lest cherished hope should end in woe.

How would my faithful wooing go  
To-night? Was Fate a friend, or foe?  
With beating heart I bent to hear  
What Nora said.

No faltering word I heard—but, oh!  
I caught love's tide at perfect flow;  
For, when, upon her lashes near,  
There shone for me a quivering tear,  
Ah, then what need had I to know  
What Nora said!

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.



### A SURPRISE

BOGGS—When did Blinks marry the widow?  
GROGGS—When he least expected it.



MOST of us, if we really knew ourselves, would drop our own names from our visiting list.



FRIEND—You will have to work hard to get that heiress to marry you.  
IMPECUNIOUS—I shall have to work harder if I don't!

# LE TABLEAU VIVANT

Par François de Nion

8 août.  
**D**EPUIS huit jours j'habite un pavillon à la pointe de cette forêt de Quimper, dont les arbres, d'une seule ondulation vaste et profonde, descendent des montagnes jusqu'au rivage. Mais, autour de ma maison, un horizon de lande s'étale en plans indéfinis qui s'étendent, qui se perdent, qui se fondent dans les lignes molles et grises de la mer et du ciel. Car, même en temps d'août, cette Bretagne est brumeuse; de l'autre côté des nuages, on sent bien qu'il y a du soleil et de l'air bleu, mais sur les pays cela ne fait qu'une ombre mate, à peine dorée, aux heures de midi, d'une lumière lointaine et dispersée. Cela est doux, d'une douceur triste qui caresse la rêverie et l'emousseline de voiles comme un visage pour un départ. Ces mers basses remuant d'une oscillation ample et lente sont toujours ces mers sur lesquelles les druides embarquaient des bateaux chargés d'âmes parties pour les cimetières vaporeux de Thulé, de la chimérique et funèbre île dans le brouillard.

La lande s'allonge, s'effile parmi l'écume des vagues, pareille à la proue mince d'un navire prêt à lever l'ancre. Quand je me tiens debout à l'extrémité de la pointe, il me semble que je n'ai devant moi que de la route, la route tentante et mystérieuse de tous ceux qui s'en furent vers les horizons, le chemin vaporeux des aventures. Ce lieu de Bretagne est un éternel *partir*!

10 août.

Derrière ma maison, il y a un parc; une étroite fenêtre percée dans mon

mur, ce qu'on nomme, je crois, un "jour de souffrance," donne sur la façade de l'habitation qu'on voit de biais. C'est une mesure assez majestueuse. Je dis mesure, parce qu'elle apparaît délabrée et majestueuse, parce que sa terrasse et ses rampes balustrées, ses degrés de pierre qui descendent noblement vers des parterres ruinés ont bel aspect et imposante façon. De grands arbres formant un long carré encadrent un boulingrin qui paraît assez soigné au milieu de l'abandon général, mais toutes les fontaines sont taries et leurs bassins séchés; seule, assez loin sous l'ombre commençante du parc, une petite mare luit d'un éclat satiné d'étain.

Tout à l'heure, comme je considérais ces choses et la délicieuse désuétude de ce décor, il s'est animé d'un jeu d'étoffes charmantes, il s'est nuancé d'un coloris si frais, si lumineux, si tendre, que j'ai cru la façade un instant rajeunie et les fontaines renaissantes. Ce n'était pourtant qu'une jeune fille qui venait d'apparaître au bout de la terrasse: elle était vêtue d'une manière somptueuse et bizarre de taffetas si changeants qu'ils semblaient refléter et peindre à la fois toutes les nuances d'alentour, de manière que le petit étang lointain parut gris-perle et jeta des tons de pâleur glauque sur la jupe, et que la verdure brusque des arbres avec la clarté tendre du ciel se mélangèrent un moment en émaux inimitables sur les linons légers des fichus.

Elle allait et venait d'un pas de nonchalance, de rythme et de contrainte, et, trois ou quatre fois, je la vis jeter les yeux vers une des fenêtres du rez-de-chaussée, comme gênée de se sentir épiée par quelque œil invisible.

L'enfant—elle devait avoir seize ans—tournant sur elle-même, me montra ses traits; ils étaient délicats et menus, d'un charme léger de pastel; ses cheveux blonds étaient disposés en deux bandeaux qui flottaient sur les épaules et s'écartaient sur le front, retenus par un mince bandeau, de la manière légendaire et convenue qu'on coiffe à l'Opéra les héroïnes, et sa taille mince se serrait d'une cordelière d'or, comme on voit à Desdémone. Je tressaillis; des notes venaient de retentir derrière les jalousies baissées de la mesure; dans le silence harmonieux des arbres, elles voguèrent: la naïve Desdémone était assise sur la rampe de pierre et tenait en main la petite lyre vaine des cantatrices qu'elle appuyait sur son genou replié. Le chant du piano dessinait maintenant la plainte tendre de la "Romance du Saule." Sans un mot, la jeune fille faisait les gestes de jouer.

Un bruit dans ma maison m'a fait détourner les yeux; quand j'ai regardé de nouveau, Desdémone avait disparu.

20 août.

Il y a des moments où il me semble que je rêve et d'autres où je me demande si je suis en train de devenir fou. Ce dont je suis certain, c'est que je suis amoureux de ma voisine. Je la revois chaque jour par l'étroite embrasure du mur et chaque fois je sens plus profondément pénétrer dans mon cœur sa grâce singulière et triste. Triste, si étrangement! Par moments, son jeune visage semble prêt à s'éclairer d'un sourire, souvent on sent la gaieté et la joie frémir sous la chair; elle me rappelle ce ciel breton si pâle et de brume, derrière lequel on devine pourtant toute la flamme du soleil. Mais un regard jeté sur les persiennes de la mesure, le choc des accords invisibles qui soudain résonnent lui font aussitôt corriger ces oublis et le masque se rattache, le masque tragique ou passionné de son rôle.

Car c'est un rôle qu'elle joue, et maintenant je l'ai compris. Depuis dix jours que je l'observe, j'ai fini par

reconnaître et par distinguer les personnages divers que l'enfant—par quel caprice ou sous quelle obligation?—incarne. Après m'avoir montré Desdémone, elle fut Marguerite aux cheveux nattés, pensive, en petit tablier noir, en manches bouffantes d'Allemande rêveuse et ménagère; elle fut Elsa, la mystérieuse, penchée sur l'énigme de son amour ou attendant l'arrivée blanche du cygne; Juliette après sa rencontre avec Roméo; Violetta même, la courtisane; Mignon, l'inquiète; Elvire, la douloureuse; Léonore, Norma, que sais-je? Elle fut tout le féminin dans ses modes les plus frémissants et, chaque fois, ce fut de la musique que cet être naquit, ce furent les sons qui le créèrent, les notes qui le rassemblaient. J'en arrivais à rêver parfois que ma jolie enfant du parc désuet n'était qu'un fantôme d'harmonie.

22 août.

J'ai cherché dans le pays à savoir qui habitait cette mesure et ce parc; les Bretons ne sont pas bavards. On me répond que c'est une Mme Delaporte, très vieille et un peu infirme, qui demeure là avec sa petite-fille. Ils croient qu'elle est de Paris; c'est tout. De Paris? C'est comme si on venait de l'infini.

1er septembre.

Je sais, maintenant; la réalité est plus simple et plus romanesque, moins banale et moins prévue que mes rêves. L'autre jour—il y a près de deux semaines déjà—une de ces questions de voisinage, de mur mitoyen, je crois, qui prennent tant d'importance à la campagne, m'a obligé de demander à Mme Delaporte un moment d'entretien; je n'ai pas eu la petite lâcheté de faire naître ou d'inventer ce prétexte, mais j'avoue que je l'ai saisi au vol.

On m'a introduit dans une pièce sombre, pourtant rayée d'or par les lames des persiennes fermées; le ciel était d'été clair. Dans cette pénombre aux tranches lumineuses, fourmille d'atomes, j'eus un peu de peine à découvrir la personne dont la voix m'accueillait, venant à moi de l'obscur.

Quelle voix! Ronde et haute, souple et prenante, douce, chaude, vibrée profondément dans les cordes basses, à la fois fiévreuse et fraîche, elle emplissait la pièce et mon être d'une sensation de bonheur et d'apaisement inouïs; j'avancaï vers elle. Dans un fauteuil, près d'un piano ouvert, une vieille se ratatinait frileusement sur elle-même. Elle était vêtue d'une manière surannée de soie grise et de "blondes" noires et coiffée de petites boucles en touffes, toutes serrées et toutes blanches. En quelques mots, nous eûmes arrangé l'affaire infime qui m'amenait et, malgré mon envie de regarder sur la terrasse à travers les jours des persiennes, j'allais me retirer quand, à mon inexprimable étonnement, elle me dit:

"Vous portez un nom qui m'est bien cher, quoique je n'aie pas connu le grand artiste qui a écrit 'Hylas' et l' 'Atlante;' êtes-vous parent du compositeur Noël Féraudon?"

"Mais c'était mon père!"

"Votre père! Oh! que je l'ai suivi, admiré, aimé depuis ma retraite! Ça a été mon plus gros regret de n'avoir jamais rien chanté de lui!"

"Chanté?"

"C'est vrai, vous ne me connaissez pas!"

Elle se leva d'un mouvement jeune et, noblement, elle prononça:

"Je suis Olympe Salviati."

La Salviati! La grande, l'illustre Salviati qui parcourut la scène et le monde en reine victorieuse, la cantatrice fameuse par sa fortune, son faste, sa beauté, ses amours; Salviati ici, dans cette mesure!

Et je me souvins de ce qu'on avait dit de sa ruine, de sa voix tout d'un coup perdue, de sa disparition violente et désespérée. Comme une bête blessée, elle s'était terrée là pour mourir.

10 septembre.

Nous sommes devenus tout à fait des amis, et j'ai été présenté à Simone, sa petite-fille, l'enfant délicieuse du parc de mystère. Nouvelle incarnation, cette fois: Simone m'est apparue coiffée en catogan, de cette manière

ravissante qui n'est plus celle des cheveux de l'enfant libres et flottants, et pas celle encore des chignons soyeux et bouffants de la jeune fille. Son vêtement participe aussi des deux natures: la jupe aux chevilles couvre à peine les pieds lestes et charmants, mais le corsage dans sa jeunesse pure est déjà celui d'une femme. Je l'aime aussi comme cela. Mon amour d'invisible, mon amour pour la petite actrice de la terrasse et du boulingrin était un peu factice et un peu pervers; maintenant, je suis sûr de chérir Simone comme un être vrai, une grâce présente—comme ma fiancée.

Je reste des heures dans le salon aux persiennes closes entre la vieille cantatrice, qui sommeille à moitié, et la jeune fille, que je sens "vivre en dedans" d'une vie impatiente et contenue. Ces heures lentes sont délicieuses; nous nous parlons des yeux, parfois d'un serrement de main furtif, nos âmes se caressent dans l'ombre. Mais Mme Delaporte—Olympe Salviati—s'éveille brusquement; ses doigts se secouent et se tordent d'un mouvement nerveux, elle les pose sur les touches qui résonnent: Simone se lève, automatique, pâlie, la figure neutre, impersonnalisée, comme prête à rassembler les traits du masque, et sa grand'mère me dit:

"Nous allons un peu travailler avec Simone; cher monsieur, à demain!"

Quelques instants après, de mon embrasure, de mon jour—oh, oui! de mon jour de souffrance—je vois passer Elsa, Desdémone ou Elvire, car c'est aussi bien ses anciens rôles que ceux qu'elle aurait voulu jouer que l'effroyable égoïsme de la vieille impose à Simone. Voici Hylas, le Hylas de mon père, l'adolescent Hylas que les nymphes ravirent, ou plutôt Simone fardée, travestie, trop tentante. Il faut l'arracher à cette vie, à cette existence de facticité dans laquelle elle s'enfièvre et s'étirole. Il faut épouser Simone et l'emmener.

3 novembre.

Depuis près de deux mois je lutte contre l'imperturbable égoïsme de cette femme: elle ne peut pas me don-



ner Simone, affirme-t-elle; elle doit lui faire continuer ses études. Quelles études? Ces fantômes de rôles?

A ma dernière et pressante demande, Mme Delaporte a répondu par un refus sec et la prière de ne plus me représenter chez elle. J'ai écrit à Simone pour lui dire ce refus définitif et ma résolution de l'enlever, de l'arracher à cette prison. Je sais un moyen de pénétrer dans le parc; elle m'attendra ce soir sur le boulingrin. Plus tard, elle sera ma femme.

4 novembre.

J'ai sauté par-dessus le mur et je me suis glissé dans le parc. La nuit était d'argent mou sous les voiles neigeux

de la lune. Sa lumière de gel, son eau de pâleur baignait le parterre et les bassins séchés des fontaines mélangées avec les feuilles mortes. Il me semblait marcher dans de la mousseline. J'appelais tout bas: "Simone! Simone!" Mais la voix s'étouffait dans l'air cotonneux. N'était-elle point venue?

Je traversai le boulingrin; le petit étang, sous les arbres, luisait d'une luisance douce et soyeuse, velouré par les touchers laiteux de la brume. Pourquoi me suis-je penché sur cette eau peu profonde? Ah! pourquoi?

Sans doute parce que je savais d'avance que j'y verrais à travers l'opale, les vêtements, les fleurs et les traits blancs de la petite Ophélie.



## LOST LOVE

I GAVE my hand to thee across the horde  
 Of creatures clashing on the restless sand;  
 To thee, unknown, unsought, I gave my hand,  
 So all the chanting ocean voiced one word.  
 Oh, thus, my soul, dear lover, yearning toward  
 Thy rare soul, like a wraith above the strand,  
 Hath seen thee fade along the stormy land,  
 Felt the blast sunder us with a stern sword.  
 Look! The frail shadows of our souls alone  
 Wander through gloomy woods, in chilly Spring,  
 Flit through the Summer night, when storms are done,  
 Listen apart, when the weak waters sing.  
 And, when some cloven cloud pours all its rain,  
 Lost love, those tears flow from our spirit's pain.

FLORENCE BROOKS.



## SUPERFLUOUS

SUPERINTENDENT—Did you give that man a thorough examination before admitting him?

INSURANCE DOCTOR—No; it wasn't necessary. He told me he was on the pension-list.



A MAN judges other women by his wife, and she judges him by the worst thing she hears about other men.

# WHEN ONE IS IN LOVE

By Ruth Parsons Milne

WHARTON turned sharply at the sound of swift footsteps behind him—turned so sharply that a collision with the rapidly approaching figure was inevitable. The winding paths of the box-bordered labyrinth were narrow to a degree, and the rose-colored vision he had seen coming toward him ran, with a little gasp, into his outspread arms. For one delirious second, Wharton could have sworn that she rested there willingly; but, before the thought had time fairly to shape itself, she drew herself away, and said, "Monsieur?" with an interrogatory dignity which Wharton considered distinctly unfair, since, of the two, he could least have expected, or avoided, the encounter. An apology from some source seemed fitting, however, and, as the rose-colored offender appeared in no wise likely to make one, Wharton began, lamely, in such French as he could muster.

"*Mademoiselle, je suis extrêmement fâché de vous—*" he ventured, and then came to a dead stop at the light of amusement glimmering in the depths of the brown eyes confronting him.

"I can't speak French," he said, desperately. "Do you happen to know any English, at all?"

To his relief, the vision responded amiably, though with a distinct accent:

"Enough to understand, I think."

"Then," said Wharton, "let me apologize for having been so enormously in the way."

"It was the path," protested the

vision, graciously; "it should be widened."

She moved, as if to go, and Wharton's heart sank. He was an inflammable young man, and it seemed to him that to let her go, when he had a knowledge only of how the hair waved on one side of her head, would be a blighting misfortune. So, he hazarded another remark, still apologetic.

"They told me I might go through the grounds without disturbing any one," he said, tentatively. "The princess, I understood, was not expected for some days."

"She has, at any rate, no—no dislike, you call it, to visitors," said his innamorata, with a pensive little smile. "No one wishes to—bomb her. She is too lee-tle!" The foreign sound of the *i* gave an effect of insignificance scarcely to be surpassed.

"You know her?" queried Wharton, interestedly. In this out-of-the-way region, one might expect almost anything. His companion surveyed him through drooping lashes.

"What would you say if I said, 'I am the princess'?"

Wharton looked at her, suspiciously, for an instant; then, catching again the gleam of amusement in her eyes, he understood that she was laughing at him.

"I haven't the ghost of a notion," he admitted, frankly. "What does one say to a princess? Your Majesty"—he burlesqued a deep bow, one hand on his heart—"must pardon my intrusion. I had understood that you were—not at home. Would that do?"

"Excellen'!" applauded the vision. "Only, Majesty—not Highness?"

"To a princess," Wharton demurred, "I really must. My American pride insists on it. Anything less would be out of keeping with my—my automobile." He was talking inanely, desperately; for the rose-colored enchantress was perpetually on the point of departure. To his surprise, he seemed to have hit upon the right word.

"You have an automobile—you?" she demanded, with a swift accession of interest.

"A poor thing," assented Wharton, mystified, "but mine own." Then, inwardly, he cursed his folly for attempting to be witty in quotations to a foreigner.

She went on, however, unheeding: "Here?" Her gesture brought the surroundings so near that Wharton glanced behind him, almost expecting to see the machine coming up the path.

"Not quite," he said, apologetically; but, as her face fell, he added, "That is it, at the gate."

"*Stupid!*" and the vision tapped an impatient foot on the gravel; "would one expect it in a labyrinth?" Then, with a swift return to amiability, "I mus' apologize," she said; "I am very impatient, me. An'—I have never ride in an automobile."

Wharton felt the blood rushing to his cheeks. Of course, it was utterly impossible, but her manner did undoubtedly suggest it; at any rate, it was a rash game he was playing, with much to gain and little to lose.

"Why not try mine?" he offered, boldly.

The vision meditated, her rose-colored hat on one side, and her parasol making holes in the walk. Wharton gazed at himself inwardly for his undeniable anxiety as to her decision.

"I will con-fess," she said, slowly; "when you—when I met you, I was—runnin' away!"

She dropped her voice, dramatically,

and Wharton said, "Really!" instinctively; then, with an effort to regain the standpoint of masculine superiority: "You seemed to be—running."

But his enchantress only nodded, ignoring, or not comprehending, his irony.

"It ennuied me, up there." She motioned vaguely in the direction of the town and the near-by castle. "I con-fide in you. They keep me too close, at home—same as if I were the princess. To be a princess, that would be nice—perhaps. But to preten' to be gran'—" She shrugged her shoulders.

"Oh, I don't know," said Wharton, judicially. "I shouldn't think it would be so bad."

"No?" The vision meditated. Then, gleefully, with a feminine disregard of the real issue, "We will try it. All the day to-day we will preten' I am a princess. You will call me your Highness——"

"Majesty," interpolated Wharton, firmly.

"—an' we will run away, in your automobile."

"Great!" said Wharton, with enthusiasm.

But the vision was regarding him critically, half-imploringly. "Please," she said, "do not think, monsieur, that I am ignorant. I know quite well that I am—what you call——"

"Unconventional?" suggested Wharton, a trifle amusedly. But the vision was sincere.

"Yes, that—improper—what you will. But, in America, I could go with you; is it not so?"

"Oh, automobiling, you know," assented Wharton, a little vaguely.

"An' here," the vision went on, plaintively, "we are kept so very strict—so very strict, an' so dull. They have never let me have one single automobile ride, an' I so wish to go."

She looked up, imploringly, a little flush rising to her shell-pink cheeks, and Wharton's amusement vanished, suddenly.

"I see," he said, seriously. "You don't wish to go because it's improper, but because it's fun. And you don't wish me to think you too unconventional; but you do wish to go?" he ended, rather lamely.

The vision clapped two tiny hands, delightedly. "Ah, monsieur!" she said, with a little gasp of approbation.

"Your Majesty's carriage is at the gate," said Wharton, with mock ceremony.

The pseudo-princess beamed graciously, but inserted a corrective. "Highness, monsieur," she laughed. Then, "Back there," pointing over her shoulder up the path whence she had come, "you will find a coat."

Wharton went, obedient to her implied mandate, and discovered a garment, presumably the one in question, lying in limp dejection on the walk around the nearest turn, where, evidently, it had fallen from her shoulders in her flight.

"But—you have it all *wrong*!" cried the princess, as he tried to put it around her. "It goes so, an' *so*!" A deft touch or two, transformed what had been merely a gray tangle into a loose wrap of cloth and chiffon that enveloped her rose-colored daintiness, as a thin, gray cloud shrouds the rising sun.

"I never had a wife," said Wharton, apologetically.

"Nor a sister? Poor man!" The princess was evolving a veil from the edge of her hat; Wharton had not noticed it before.

"Ready?" he demanded, impatient at this threatened obscuring of his rose-colored ideal.

But she shook her head, firmly. "You go back," she ordered, "by this path." She pointed to a half-hidden intersecting one. "Send away your man, an' then run your automobile aroun' the north side of the groun's till you come to a lee-tle door"—again the effect of insignificance—"an' there get out an' rap—"

"And the princess will appear!" Wharton finished for her. "But, are

you sure they won't find you in the meantime?"

"They?" said the princess; "who?"

"Why, whoever you were running away from."

The princess shook her head. "I have tol' them not to follow," she said, with a little frown. "I was runnin'—to be quick. You see?"

"Um! And won't they worry?"

"Per-haps," acquiesced the princess, cheerfully; "most likely. But I tol' them I should not be back. I have—" she deprecated his disapproval with fluttering eyelids—"I have ran away before, sometimes. I can *not* be ennuied for always. So, they know I come back—always."

Her color rose under Wharton's scrutiny—he could see that, even through the veil which now covered her face. He wished to ask if she had always had a companion in those previous escapades, and one of the opposite sex; but, even yet, he feared her elusiveness. So he only said, more gravely:

"You are sure you can get out of the little door?"

"Oh, yes!" she assented, gaily, her hand traveling to the long, gold chain that ended in an invisible something at her belt; "it is always unlock—for me," she added, under her breath.

Wharton turned away. "I'll be there in five minutes," he said, decisively; "that is, if I ever get out of this box-bordered mix."

"Follow that path. Make no turns at all, an' you will come out at the gate—almos'."

"You seem to know the paths extremely well."

"You forget—I am the princess."

"A thousand pardons," smiled Wharton, making his way backward, as best he might, around the sharp corner of the designated path; "a thousand pardons—your Majesty."

"Highness—Highness, monsieur." Her silvery correction floated half-in-audibly after his retreating form.

Despite his utmost haste, Wharton's five minutes had been more than doubled by the time he reached the worm-eaten, iron-barred door in the

north wall. An automobile does not make its best speed over uneven roads, and, to his surprise, the young man had found the way around the north side of the grounds to be little more than a country lane. So, there was doubt mingled with his impatience as he rapped sharply on the weather-beaten boards that confronted him, and he was more than half-surprised when the door swung slowly inward in answer to his knock. Instead, however, of the opening revealing a part of the gardens, in whose beauty Wharton had so reveled, earlier in the day, he found himself peering uncomfortably into a large, vine-covered arbor, half-way down the dim twilight of which stood a gray figure. He hesitated on the threshold, but the figure beckoned him in with an imperious little nod. The door swung to behind him, manipulated, Wharton then saw, by an elderly man, obviously a servant, dressed in sober black, and wearing on his countenance a most impossible mixture of devotion, discretion and disapprobation.

"I am very sorry, me," deprecated the pseudo-princess, hastily, "but I mus' stay behin'. He does not understand' English," she added, with a glance at the disapproving servitor.

Wharton smiled, disappointedly. "So, they did find you?" he said, interrogatively.

She drew herself up with dignity. "He came to tell me that I am needed at home—that some one especial is arrive'. I will be miss'—there will be a——"

"Scandal?" suggested Wharton, a little sarcastically; but she nodded acceptance of the word.

"I am very sorry, me," she repeated. "I would so have liked to go."

"Your Majesty's regret is as nothing to mine," returned Wharton, ceremoniously. He was beginning to fear that she had never intended to go—that he had been made a fool of; and he was, in addition, egregiously disappointed.

"Her Highness," she responded, with a dimple in one cheek, "fears she

has greatly inconvenienced monsieur. An' there is no opportunity at present to express her regrets. They may have miss' her by now."

"It seems more than likely," said Wharton. "To be out of your Majesty's society must be to miss you."

To his relief, she caught the play on the English words.

"But that is *nice*," she said, growing a little pink. "Will you—?" For a moment, she looked into Wharton's eyes.

"Miss you? All my life!" he responded, with a fervor which astounded even himself.

"That," said the princess, meditatively, "would be mos' *pathétique*. Do you suppose, if you saw me once again, it would be better?"

"It would at least shorten the space of my existence without you." But, before his companion could answer, the old servant stepped forward, evidently impatient of the delay, and uttered a rapid and, to Wharton, unintelligible protest. The pseudo-princess nodded uneasily, and turned hastily to Wharton.

"He says I mus' go on the moment; but——" She hesitated.

"To-morrow?" demanded Wharton, boldly.

"Per-haps." She flushed a little.

"At twelve—here?"

The flush deepened. "I often," she said, softly, "am in this arbor. Adieu, monsieur."

"Au revoir, your Majesty." And he heard, faintly, as the old servant swung the door slowly shut after him, her laughing correction, "Highness, Highness, monsieur!"

No one had ever denied that Wharton was impressionable—he himself least of all; but the impatience with which he knocked at the door in the wall, the next day, surprised him, accustomed as he was to his own vagaries. To his relief, the door opened; but, when he hastily entered the arbor, he was confronted only by the old servant, who, dignified and disapproving as ever, presented to Wharton a



tiny note, with the air of one who would with more pleasure have offered him a slow poison. Dismay spread over Wharton's face as he read. The Princess Marie-Hélène-Victoire-Louise—the name in quotation marks—regretted extremely that important events in her family made her presence at the castle imperative. Unless monsieur was to be long a resident in the principality, she feared that there would be no opportunity to renew their acquaintance; if, however, he was to be there a few days more, she would take pleasure in sending him a card to the ball which was shortly to be given in her honor, if monsieur would kindly notify her of his name and address. The bearer of the note might be depended upon as discreet and reliable.

Wharton folded the note deliberately, and put it in his pocket. The servant regarded him, questioningly; evidently, he had been told that there would be an answer.

"Tell your mistress," said Wharton, with a dignity equal, he flattered himself, to the servant's own, "that there is no message."

The servant's gaze still remained questioning and expectant. Wharton frowned; he had forgotten that the man spoke no English.

"*Pas de réponse,*" he said, with less dignity, throwing open his hands in a gesture of dismissal; and, to his relief, the servant, understanding either the words or the gesture, bowed an assent.

A week later, and Wharton was still in the principality. Despite his refusal to give his name or whereabouts, a messenger had brought him a gorgeously emblazoned card, ornamented with the royal coat of arms, and a request, which read more like a command, for his presence at the ball to be given by the city to the princess, on the evening of the fourth of June. It had been, he supposed, easy to discover him; few strangers came that way, and none for a long stay; and the police force of a capital of that size was always efficient

in proportion to its uselessness and unimportance. She was carrying out her part of princess very well, he reflected; evidently, she had a friend at court; perhaps, she was at court herself—doubtless, that was the explanation. Of course, he was not going to the ball; he intended to leave town that night; and he had merely come out past the little door in the castle wall into the near-by lanes, that he might make up his mind, still more firmly, to depart. He had not, he assured himself, the slightest idea of catching a glimpse of his princess—had he not unavailingly taken the same route for a week?—but, even should he see her, it would, of course, make no difference in his plans, he argued, sternly. Yet, he felt a slight sinking of the heart when the worm-eaten door in the wall remained impenetrably closed to his passing gaze; and his interest in the surrounding scenery became, thereafter, so slight that he forgot his automobile was running through rough country roads, until, with a depressing snap and rattle, it stopped short.

"Damn!" said Wharton, decisively. He was without his man, and his knowledge of mechanics was limited. To his astonishment, a silvery ripple of laughter answered his expletive. He looked up, amazedly, and there, seated on the grassy bank some few feet above him, was his princess, dressed in fluffy white, and with the general appearance of having dropped from the clouds.

Wharton beamed; then, he remembered the wrath he had been nursing for a week, and frowned.

"Good afternoon," he said, stiffly; and, dismounting from his driving-seat, he explored anxiously the hidden depths of the machine's internal arrangements. At the end of five minutes, he emerged, flushed and striving vainly to look very intelligent. He might have spared himself the trouble; the princess was serenely picking a daisy to pieces, in apparent ignorance of, or indifference to, his presence.

"*Un peu—beaucoup,*" murmured the princess, abstractedly; "*passionnément—*"

Wharton approached, hat in hand. "I regret exceedingly—" he began.

The princess raised her eyes, in solemn reproach of his interruption.

"*Pas du tout,*" she continued; "*il m'aime—un peu—beaucoup—passionnément.*" The last petal fell to the ground, and she clapped her hands, delightedly; then, with dignity, "Monsieur wishes——?"

"My automobile is out of order. I shall be obliged to leave it to impair the beauty of the lanes and of your Majesty's view, until I can get my man out from the city."

To his surprise, the princess's face expressed consternation. "Broke—quite broke?" she exclaimed, in dismay. "An' you don' know how to fix it? Oh, monsieur!"

Wharton succumbed instantly at the reproach in her tone.

"I'm an awful duffer at machinery," he said, again apologetic. Then, boldly, "If it had been in order, would you have gone to ride this time?"

"I was going to ask you to take me back—to the lee-tle door."

"Just my luck!" said Wharton, despondently.

"But," said the princess, "I am in such a—a—feex, you would call it. You see, I—I ran away—again—alone," she added, with a little *moue* at Wharton's half-involuntary glance around for a possible companion, "an', per-haps, I ran too fast. At least, I have hurt my ankle." She looked commiseratingly at her fluffy white skirts. "An' I was hoping monsieur would help me home."

Wharton groaned. "I haven't the ghost of a notion how to fix the beastly thing," he admitted, frankly; "but—if you could wait, I could walk back and get some one." His tone expressed no great eagerness for departure; nor did the princess seem well pleased with his plan. She meditated a moment, her head on one side.

"It is not so very far to the door—the lee-tle door," she ventured, finally. "Per-haps——"

"If I helped you?" Wharton's tone was joyous, and the princess showed her dimples.

"We could go very slow," she said, tentatively.

"Very."

"An'—very careful. You know, I mus' be at the ball to-night."

"So you must; I had forgotten about the ball," admitted Wharton, rashly.

The princess gazed at him, surprisedly. "Monsieur intends to go—is it not so?" she demanded.

He flushed. "Well, to tell the truth, I—I don't. I have—" he stumbled outrageously under the reproach in her eyes—"I have some important business, and I must leave town this evening."

The princess regarded the toe of her absurdly small white shoe.

"Very important?" she queried, indifferently.

"Very," said Wharton, firmly. He felt convinced that this was the time to be firm.

The princess sighed. "In that case," she said, still indifferently, "I have already detain' monsieur too long; he mus' need to make his adieus. If monsieur will have the goodness to stop at the castle gate, an' tell them to sen'——"

Wharton sat down. "Now, look here," he began, argumentatively; but the princess shook her head.

"So very important business," she insisted. "I could not forgive myself to detain monsieur—no."

Wharton hesitated—and was lost. "Of course," he said, guiltily evasive, "to do your Majesty——"

"Highness, monsieur!" she interrupted, severely.

"—a service——"

"I could not," the princess insisted, "permit so gran' a sacrifice of so very important business."

"Nothing," said Wharton, "that I could do for you would be a sacrifice."

The princess blushed. "But that is nice," she said. "Almos' you persuade me to accept. An', perhaps, after all"—she looked up, shyly, from under her long lashes—"it was not so very important—that business."

"Not at all," said Wharton, fervently, only half-aware of what he was saying.

The princess clapped her hands, delightedly. "An' monsieur will go to the ball—for me?" she cried.

"I will go to the devil for you, if you like," was Wharton's prompt response.

The princess gasped. "I mus' speak English very bad indeed. I meant—the ball for me, not you to go for me."

"I'll do it, though," said Wharton, wagging his head, stubbornly; then, with an access of curiosity: "Is it a—a birthday party?"

"A—*quoi*?" The princess was plainly puzzled.

"A—*fête*?" Wharton attempted.

"Ah!" the princess nodded comprehension; "for me, because I am—what you call it?—*fiancée*—*be-troth*'—"

Wharton gasped. "You are—!" Then, a way of escape presenting itself, "Oh, you—the princess?"

She nodded acquiescence, and Wharton heaved a sigh of relief.

"To whom?" he demanded next.

The princess recounted, glibly: "Princess Marie-Hélène-Victoire-Louise, à Son Majesté——"

"So he's a Majesty, at any rate," interpolated Wharton.

"Son Majesté, Henri-Auguste-Edouard-Louis-Eustace, Roi de Gotha, Prince de Saxe-burg, Comte de Reichfeld—de Lautengraum—de——"

Wharton threw up his hands. "He appears to be the real thing," he said, in answer to her look of inquiry, "but I think I'd better get him written down. I should judge it was a good match?"

"Ex-celent," assented the princess; "most unusual' good. An' besides—" she spoke with conviction—"he is handsome an'—nice."

"So that, take it altogether, you are quite a lucky woman."

"But yes"—her voice, Wharton felt, was aggressively cheerful—"quite a lucky woman. It was he," she added, "came too soon, the other day, in the labyrinth. He is anxious to see me, always—on the moment—when he arrive'."

"I don't doubt it," said Wharton, gloomily, relapsing into a melancholy silence. He felt depressed—unaccountably so; but the princess broke into his gloom with a horrified,

"But, monsieur——!"

Wharton followed her gaze toward the rapidly setting sun.

"I suppose you're right," he acquiesced. "How will the ankle go?" He rose to his feet, and assisted the princess to hers, where she balanced like an attractive variety of stork, making little faces of disgust when her lame foot touched the ground.

"Do you think you can get there? It isn't very far, you know."

The princess tried to place her foot on the ground, winced, then shut her teeth with a little click of determination.

"One can always do what one—mus'," she said, defiantly; and, forthwith, they set out.

In spite of this declaration, and in spite of her evident bravery, it took a long time to accomplish the distance between the grass-covered bank where Wharton had found her and the worm-eaten door. Hanging to Wharton's arm, she hobbled along, biting her red lips now and then, un conversational, but plucky, until the door was fairly in sight; then, suddenly, she stopped short.

"It is impossible, monsieur," she said, plaintively. "I can *not* go farther." There were tears in her voice; Wharton thought that there were tears in her eyes, as well, and quite forgot that he was speaking to a pseudo-princess.

"Can't?" he said, half-caressingly; "then, by Jove, you sha'n't!" And, with a calculating glance up and down the deserted road, he caught her up in

his arms, and traversed the hundred yards that lay between them and the door, without heeding her little cry of protest. At the door, he stopped, set down his precious burden, and said, apologetically: "It was the only way."

"It was very kind of monsieur. I could not have walk' it, myself." She was fumbling at her belt for the end of her gold chain, which, when discovered, proved to be attached to a key that fitted the lock of the little door. Wharton whistled under his breath.

"So, you have a key?" he murmured. "Well!" He put it in the lock, and turned it; the princess, in her haste, made a rash step forward, turned white, and hesitated with the pain. Wharton instinctively threw a sustaining arm about her waist, while with the other hand he pushed open the easy-swinging door. And then, instead of the solitude of the delightful arbor—a tableau!

Evidently interrupted in a friendly chat, sat two men—one, elderly, with an unmistakable air of distinction; the other, young and handsome, dressed in a uniform which even Wharton's unpractised eye recognized as one of high rank.

"*Nom de Dieu*," gasped the princess, under her breath. The two men jumped to their feet.

"Hélène!" said the younger man.

"Your Highness!" said the elder, with a low bow.

"Ah," said the princess, with apparent nonchalance, to the first speaker, "*c'est toi, Louis*. Thy arm; I can then release this gentleman, who has been so kin' as to assist me."

Wharton's arm dropped from its supporting embrace, as the younger of the two men stepped forward to the princess's aid.

"Louis," she added, graciously, "it is Monsieur Wharton—monsieur, it is my fiancé, Louis of Gotha, and," turning to the elderly man, "Monsieur Renard, my chief adviser."

The three men bowed in stiff silence, but the princess continued, suavely: "We express our thanks, monsieur; I could never have manage' without

your help. Adieu, monsieur." She extended a gracious little hand, and Wharton bowed low over it.

"I am very glad," he said, smoothly, "to have been of any service to your"—he hesitated, and the princess's glance met his for an imperceptible part of a moment—"your Highness."

Wharton's frame of mind, on the long walk back from the castle to the hotel, was not an amiable one. He had been deceived; and, though the deception had been achieved merely by means of the truth skilfully told, there was none the less a reason for feeling aggrieved. She had undoubtedly told him that she was the princess; but, quite as undoubtedly, she had not meant him to believe her. And, yet, Wharton felt there had been nothing in his conduct to relieve him from the charge of the grossest stupidity. To tell the truth is often a very effective way to deceive; but it is the most irritating method possible for its victim.

By the time Wharton had reached the hotel, he had renounced, with deepest fervor, the princess and the principality, and had resolved upon instant departure as the only possible balm for his wounded spirit. In pursuance of this idea, he started his long-suffering man out in search of the abandoned automobile, and had just dragged an armful of clothes from the orderly array in the wardrobe, and thrown them on the bed in a disheveled heap, preparatory to packing, when a knock at the door interrupted him. Wharton jerked it open, impatiently.

"Well?" he demanded. Without, there stood a solemn, alarmed servant, who explained in solemn, alarmed English, that *monsieur le préfet de police* was below and must see Monsieur Wharton on the instant.

"The deuce you say!" responded Wharton. "Show him up." The servant, comprehending, at least, the last part of the sentence, vanished, re-appearing swiftly in escort of a stout, military individual with an enormous mustache.

"Monsieur Wharton?" demanded the personage.

Wharton bowed. "I have the honor to address *monsieur le préfet de police*?"

The *préfet* bowed in his turn.

"Will you enter?" Wharton threw open the door still farther. "I am preparing to leave, so the room——"

"Thousand pardons," puffed the *préfet*, out of breath from his ascent of the stairs. "I shall detain you but the moment. His Majesty, Henri-Auguste-Edouard-Louis-Eustace, King of Gotha, Prince of——"

"Yes, yes!" interrupted Wharton, impatiently; "I know all that. What about him?"

The *préfet* puffed ominously a moment, then smiled. "These Americans," he chuckled, pleased with his own wit in discovering the reason for his host's peculiarities, "these Americans! So impatient!" He chuckled again.

"Well, *monsieur le préfet*?" demanded Wharton.

"His Majesty, Henri-Auguste-Edouard——" began the *préfet* again; then, catching sight of the look on Wharton's face, he broke into another chuckle. "So impatient!" he murmured, and continued: "His Majesty urges that monsieur attend to-night the ball. I carry an invitation." He produced a card, identical with the one Wharton had already received. The latter bowed, gravely.

"I am deeply indebted to his Majesty," he responded, "but important business necessitates my immediate departure."

The *préfet* looked puzzled. "My English!" he said, apologetically; "it is of the worst. Is it that monsieur accepts? yes?"

"Monsieur finds it impossible to accept," said Wharton, with incisive slowness.

The *préfet* puffed with horror.

"But, monsieur," he protested, "his Majesty requests your presence!"

"Impossible!" repeated Wharton, with firmness.

"But," protested the *préfet*, "his Majesty's wish must be execute'. His Majesty is a guest." He fairly collapsed in despair. "I shall be dis-

grace'. Her Highness will say again, 'Graustein, thou art a soldier—yes; but a diplomat—no!' Her Highness——"

"What's her Highness got to do with it?" demanded Wharton.

"All!" groaned the *préfet*. "Her Highness sent me. And to fail——" Wharton's face changed involuntarily. "Monsieur relents?" cried the *préfet*, joyously.

"Being an American," said Wharton, with guilty evasion, "it would never do to refuse a lady." And he bowed the overjoyed *préfet* out, as rapidly as possible, to escape his effusive thanks, only to hear him, as he toiled down the steep stairs, mutter to himself, "These Americans—so polite, and so—impossible!"

The ball, given by the capital to its princess, was in the town itself, in a brilliantly-lighted building near the hotel; but, despite its proximity, Wharton, still nursing his wrath, went very late to his enforced gaiety.

The princess had finished receiving, he was informed; and he slipped—unnoticed, he hoped—into a corner of the ball-room, intending to slip as quietly out again, so soon as his conscience should declare his duty performed.

He was not left long, however, to commune with his conscience; almost immediately, a hand touched his shoulder, and a low voice said, in a tone of authority: "This way, monsieur."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders, and obeyed. His guide led him but a short distance around the angle of a hall to a heavily curtained door.

"Monsieur Wharton!" the guide announced, with a flourish.

Wharton stepped through the doorway, expecting to find a roomful of people; instead, the occupants were only two—the King of Gotha, and M. Renard. The king was again in uniform, and both men were resplendent with orders. The king was the first to speak.

"We have met before, Monsieur



Wharton," he said, with an attempt at geniality.

"Will monsieur be seated?" said M. Renard, with more successful cordiality. The three men sat down, and there was a moment's pause.

"Monsieur Wharton was kind enough to delay his departure at my request," said the king. "I was obliged to ask it," he continued, hastily, "as otherwise, I should have been unable to see monsieur alone, without causing comment."

Wharton bowed, stiffly, noticing with envy the king's excellent command of English.

"Your Majesty wished, then, to see me alone?" he inquired.

"After the events of this afternoon, could monsieur doubt it?" said M. Renard.

"This afternoon?" queried Wharton.

The king flushed, and then grew white. "I wished an opportunity to thank you for your assistance to the Princess Hélène—my fiancée," he said, in explanation.

"As to that," said Wharton, maliciously, "it was a pleasure."

"*Nom de—!*" began the king, under his breath.

M. Renard shook his head, gravely. "I fear," he said, "that monsieur regards the matter as somewhat of a joke. I regret to be obliged to inform monsieur that it is, on the contrary, somewhat serious."

"I confess," said Wharton, more soberly, "I am at a loss to see how it should be so. I find her Highness in distress; I offer her such assistance as I am able; I said, and repeat, that it was a pleasure to do so; I restore her to your Majesty; there my connection with the affair appears to me to cease."

"Ah!" said the king, excitedly, "but where did it begin, monsieur?"

M. Renard reached out a quieting hand. "If your Majesty will permit me to explain," he said, gently, "perhaps Monsieur Wharton will see our difficulty."

The king nodded, and relapsed gloomily into the depths of his chair.

"His Majesty," proceeded M. Renard, smoothly, "has been urged to the choice of the Princess Hélène as his consort by two motives, one being that of expediency—the match, from the point of view of a statesman, being most desirable—the other, and the chief, motive being the sincere affection which his Majesty has for the princess."

His Majesty glanced up at Wharton with a boyishly appealing smile. "You see," he said, explanatorily, "I'm in love with her."

"I see," said Wharton, with a sympathetic stir in his heart; he himself had been on the verge of that state so very recently.

"And she is," said the king, still boyish, "the very devil to be in love with."

M. Renard coughed, gently, and the king, flushing, relapsed again into gloom.

"His Majesty has, however," continued M. Renard, "heard, many times, annoying reports of a fondness the princess has for—" M. Renard hesitated.

"Running away," interpolated the king, shortly.

Wharton chuckled inwardly. He was beginning to like the king.

"The princess is young," deprecated M. Renard, "and high-spirited; but she always comes back."

"Yes," said the king, drily. "She came back this afternoon—with your arm about her, monsieur."

"You perceive," said M. Renard, in an undertone, "the difficulty is not one of—statecraft, monsieur. His Majesty declares himself unwilling to continue the match, unless some explanation can be made; yet, as a matter of expediency, the alliance is as desirable as ever—most desirable, in fact. You understand me, monsieur?"

"But," protested Wharton, "to explain further, your Majesty! I came to the princess's assistance as

I would have come to that of any woman in distress."

The king looked at him, dubiously, and Wharton, possessed of an uneasy conscience, changed color, in spite of himself. "Why not," he suggested, "ask her Highness to explain?"

M. Renard smiled. "Her Highness has explained," he volunteered. "But his Majesty——"

"Her Highness could explain the moon out of high heaven—for me," said the king, somberly; "but the moon would still be there—for the others."

"If my assurance that I regard her Highness——" Wharton began, with half-suppressed amusement.

"That is the point," said the king; "you do regard her—in fact, monsieur, you have had your arm about her." He rose, excitedly. "I would not, monsieur, marry the Queen of England, if she had permitted——" He came to an abrupt pause; the inner curtains at the door swayed, parted and dropped together again behind the figure of the princess. She was dressed all in white, with a white rose somewhere in her hair, and row after row of pearls about her lovely neck.

"Of course," she said, with a little laugh, "you wouldn't marry the Queen of Englan'. You don't mean to be a bigamist—no?"

The three men looked at her; Renard gravely, Wharton admiringly, and the king with a light in his eyes which Wharton felt might have been in his own, had he been an eligible king.

"I have look' an' look' for you everywhere, Louis," she said, "an' you were here, you three, talking, an' me all alone." She advanced with a pathetic little limp to the middle of the room. "Poor Monsieur Wharton!" she said, with sympathy; "I know what they are askin' you. 'At what minute of what hour——'" she burlesqued M. Renard's suavity—"did you discover her Highness? Was your automobile

badly broke?'" 'Can you swear she could not have walk' without your help?' Hélas!" she sighed, exaggeratedly, "see what it is to have a jealous fiancé."

"But, Hélène——" protested the king, feebly.

"Jeal-ous," she repeated. "I have explain' an' explain' myself how it came; now I will *show* you. Go, Louis, an' stan' beside Monsieur Wharton."

The king, flushed but obedient, placed his six-feet-two beside Wharton's six-feet."

"Now, Monsieur Wharton," dictated the princess, "you will please to get limp, like me at the door this afternoon. Limp!" as Wharton tottered awkwardly, "like you were to faint!"

"I never fainted," murmured, Wharton, resentfully. "How's this?"

"Catch him!" cried the princess, suddenly, pointing an imperative finger at the king; and he, making a flurried clutch at the relaxing Wharton, caught him around the waist.

The princess spread out both hands. "You see!" she said. "Yet I am not jeal-ous!"

Wharton readjusted his tie, much amused, yet with a distinct feeling of envy at his heart. She was unattainable, and desirable—he admitted one fact as freely as the other.

"I think," he said, "that her Highness's explanation of the occurrence is more satisfactory than any I could make."

The king turned, impulsively. "Monsieur," he said, "I have been a fool"—the princess nodded affirmation—"but, when one is in love——" he held out his hand in apology, and Wharton grasped it, heartily.

"Exactly!" he said; "when one is in love!" And, though he did not look toward the princess, he could have sworn he heard a tiny sigh.

"Monsieur will not stay?" deprecated the princess.

"I regret——" began Wharton.

"There are some very pretty girls," suggested the princess.

"—that I have some very important business," continued Wharton, unmoved.

"Very important?" said the princess, looking down.

"Very important."

The princess moved lamely toward the door. "I have to thank you for your assistance," she said, formally.

"It was, as I have said, a pleasure," said Wharton. Their eyes met a moment.

"An' you help' me to explain it so very nicely."

"I am glad to have been of service to your Highness—in any way," responded Wharton, with an irrepressible twinkle in his eye.

The princess glanced at the king, who had moved out of ear-shot. "Suppose they had seen—through the wall!" she said, in pretended horror; then, "he is handsome, *n'est-ce*

*pas?*" And Wharton's envy grew apace.

"He is a brick," he responded, warmly.

The princess clapped her hands, then frowned. "But so jeal-ous!"

"When one is in love—" said Wharton.

The princess blushed, and Wharton, turning, bowed his adieus to the king and M. Renard.

"My heartiest apologies for your detention, monsieur," said the king, in farewell.

"Nex' time I run away—" said the princess, turning threateningly to the king.

"Next time!" said the king.

"—you better be glad if I come back at all! An' I shall never explain—again. Adieu, monsieur!"

"Adieu, your—Majesty," said Wharton, softly, bending over her outstretched hand.



## HEART SACRIFICE

IF I had loved him less, perhaps—

I do not know, one cannot know—

He might have loved me more, and I

Should not have felt within me grow

The crying loneliness, which comes

To women's hearts that love and wait

In longing, hopeless hopefulness

Outside the unpermitting gate.

And yet, if I had loved him less,

I should not know—one could not know—

The rapture of love's sacrifice.

Those fires, through ashes, always glow

To light the long, hard way that leads

The faltering spirit up to see

The infinite unselfishness

Which saved mankind on Calvary.

WILLIAM J. LAMPTON.



A PINT measure, rather than a bushel, would be quite sufficient to hide the light of some people we know.

# THE MARRIED MAN

By Morgan Robertson

HE told the story while he and I smoked at one end of his veranda, and his kindly-faced wife talked with "the only girl on earth" at the other end, beyond reach of his voice. He was a large, portly and benign old gentleman, with an infinite experience of life, whom I had long known as a fellow-tenant in the studio building. He was not an artist, but an editorial-writer on one of the great dailies, who worked, cooked and slept in his studio, until Saturday evening came, when he regularly disappeared, until Monday morning.

There was nothing in this to surprise me, until he invited the only girl and myself to visit his country home over Sunday, incidentally informing us that he was a married man, and had been for more than twenty years.

And we found him most happily married. Indeed, he and his white-haired wife were so foolishly fond of each other that their caresses would have seemed absurd had they not been so genuine.

These old lovers had made much of us; and they seemed so sincerely interested in our coming marriage that, in the evening, as night settled over the quiet little suburb, and we sought the veranda for coolness, I ventured to comment to my host on his mode of life.

"Best plan in the world," he answered. "You'll find it so, after a year or two of creative work at home. Don't give up your studio. If you do, you will suffer—as I did before I began my double life—from nervous prostration. I was writing when I married—long-winded essays, sermons,

editorials, and arguments about nothing at all, simply built up from the films of my imagination. The thousand-and-one distractions of household life interfered too much, and the more I tried to force my brain the more I fatigued it. The result was that I had a bad six months with myself, and then gave out, just on the verge of insanity.

"Yes, my home life nearly maddened me, as I have said. Then, I took a studio, lived in it, and visited my wife twice a week. The result was that I got my work done, and found my wife as glad to see me as I was to see her. It was like a lad's going to see his girl; and, talk as you like about conjugal bliss, a woman gets tired of a man about the house all day long. Still, there is a danger attached to this dual residence. One must walk straight, for he is a marked man. I had an experience at the beginning, that taught me the need of prudence.

"It was while I was mentally convalescent, but yet a very weak man, nervous, irritable, and of unsound judgment. There was about the same kind of a crowd in the building as now—artists, musicians, actors and actresses. There were women coming and going at all hours, and all sorts of shady characters had access to the place. One day, a neighbor named Bunker brought a pleasing young person in black into my place, and introduced us. She was the widow, she informed me, of a newspaper man, who often, when alive, had spoken of me. So, hearing that I was in the building, she had asked her friend, Mr. Bunker, to bring us together, as

she wished to know her dear husband's friends. She wiped away a tear at this point—genuine, too.

"Now, I had no remembrance of her husband, but, feeling kindly toward any newspaper man's widow, I welcomed her, and Bunker left us together. She was intelligent, with literary aspirations, and we chatted a while very agreeably. Then, she borrowed a book, and left.

"I had noticed that, though neatly dressed, her clothing was palpably cheap in quality, and, when she came again—without Bunker, this time—it seemed a little more worn than was consistent with good times. So, I questioned her gently, and learned that she had eaten nothing that day. She was trying to make her way by writing short stories, and that fact aroused my pity—a pity that grew when I saw her eat the luncheon I provided from my ice-box.

"She did not come again for a month, and then she appeared with the blackest eye I had ever seen on a woman. She was seedier than ever, and looked hungry. I was deeply sorry for her, believing her clothing a sure index of an honest woman's struggle to remain honest. Partly, from the delicacy of feeling due to this belief, and, partly, because I had but thirty-five cents in my pocket, I made no offer of pecuniary assistance. But, after giving me a conventional explanation of the cause of the black eye, she hinted plainly that, unless she could raise ten dollars before night, she would be turned out of her room. This was serious, and I took thought.

"It was Friday, and a holiday. I knew that there was no one in the building but Bunker and myself, and Bunker was one of those rollicking souls who are in a continuous condition of cheerful impecuniosity. There was not a place open in the neighborhood except the saloons, and there I was not known. Clearly, I could not raise any money for her that day; but I promised her the use of my studio for the two following nights, when I

should be home in the country, and I agreed to induce Bunker, who slept in his boarding-house, to put her up in his place for that night. This would provide sleeping quarters and the use of my gas-stove and ice-box for three nights and two days, by which time something might turn up. She expressed herself as satisfied, and I went out to interview Bunker.

"'No,' he declared, vehemently, 'I can't take any woman to my place.' 'Bunker,' I interrupted, solemnly, 'you brought this young woman here, you have pretended to be her friend, and her claim upon you is enough to warrant her in expecting help at this critical moment. Remember, Bunker, this is a crisis with her. If she is helped, she may pull through; if not, she may lose heart and courage, and go to ruin.'

"My words impressed him. 'All right,' he said; 'I don't know much about her lately—knew her family well, out West—that's all. I'll give you my key, before I go home—want to lock myself in and work for a while now. Have a drink. Got some good stuff here.'

"I declined, and went back to my visitor, picking up on the way a telegraph messenger, who had arrived with a despatch for me.

"Unwearied in well-doing, glad that I was an instrument in helping this worthy young woman, I assured her of the success of my mission—before opening the telegram. And she thanked me, with tears—genuine again. Then, slightly affected myself, I broke the envelope, and read:

"Meet me 5.30 Pennsylvania ferry. If miss you will come to your office.

"MAUD MILNER.

"Now, Maud Milner was the wife of an old friend of mine; and, too, she was my wife's old school chum. She had never been in New York, and she did not know that my 'office' was a bachelor's apartment. But her visit had been prearranged, and I had written the invitation on my studio stationery, so that her response was quite innocent; yet, I had peculiar



reasons—aside from the presence there of my penniless and interesting protégée—for not wishing her to visit my place in town.

"I had paid her fully as much attention before her marriage as I had my wife; in fact, I courted them both at once, in order to arouse their sense of pique. Not a strictly honorable thing to do, had either of them cared for me, initially; but neither did care, and I might not have won my wife by any other plan. The two were bad friends for a while, and, to this day, my wife cannot rid herself of a very slight jealousy. So, you see the reason for my anxiety to avoid any possibility of complications.

"I had just enough time in which to get to the ferry, and, after emphasizing to the widow the necessity of her getting Bunker's key before he left, and of leaving my studio empty against the possible arrival of Mrs. Milner without me, I rushed away.

"I reached the ferry on time; but Mrs. Milner was not there, nor did she come, though I waited until seven o'clock. Then, I inquired, and an official informed me that the five-thirty—the train boat—had met with an accident, and had landed her passengers at the nearest dock, which was a little further up. I hurried there, but Mrs. Milner was not visible. At last, fearing lest she had gone to the studio, and had met the widow with that picturesque black eye, I hastened up-town again.

"At the street-door, I met Bunker—drunk as a lord.

"Is she up there yet?" I asked, anxiously.

"Who?" he answered, in a tone that told me he had forgotten.

"Did you give her your key? Give me that key—the key of your studio. Hurry up!"

"A dim light of intelligence flashed over his cheerful face, and he grinned.

"Oh, yesh—yesh; thash so!" He pulled out a bunch of keys. Here's keys, ol' man—street-door key and studio key.'

"As he staggered off, I bounded up the stairs, with the two keys he had pulled from his bunch.

"The widow met me at my door.

"Has a lady called here?" I asked, hastily.

"Somebody peeped in,' she said. 'It may have been a lady, but I thought it was Mr. Bunker, and as soon as I could—I was dressing my eye—I followed out; but he was gone.'

"Oh, Lord!" I groaned. 'If it was she, she's gone out to my place, and she will tell my wife.'

"Then, I remembered that Mrs. Milner did not have my country address, and was comforted.

"But I had been extremely agitated, and now my shattered nervous system went back on me so completely that I practically turned that interesting female out.

"The lady may come back at any moment,' I said. 'Here are the keys—this one for the outer door, this one for the studio. Don't let her find you with me in this place.'

"I gave the widow the keys, and she left, saying that she would make a call on some one who had promised her employment, and that she would not annoy me further. She was extremely grateful for my kindness, and all that.

"I hurried her out; and, after a while, settled down to my desk, and worked through the evening—worked hard, to keep from worrying over the whereabouts of Mrs. Milner, alone in that great city.

"Mrs. Milner quite failed to appear; but, at eleven o'clock, the other one came. I heard her in the hall, fumbling at the keyhole of Bunker's door, and went out.

"This key will not unlock the door,' she said, and I joined her.

"Trying the key, I found that it did not fit—in fact, that it was a key shaped differently from all other door-keys in that building; and I knew that the befuddled Bunker had made a mistake.

"He gave you the right key for the street-door,' the widow whimpered;

'why did he give the wrong one for this door?'

"'Drunk,' I growled. 'Come in, and we'll talk it over.'

"'Oh, I cannot,' she complained. 'To think of it! the terrible position I am in! Oh, to think of it!'

"'Don't think of it,' I answered; 'it's all right. Don't think of it, and don't talk of it. I'll say nothing, and I'll go home as soon as I've finished the page I'm on. Come in and sit down.'

"I led her in, and sat her down, but her plaint would not cease. I fancied there was a smell of liquor in the air, but I could not be sure that it was not the clinging odor left by Bunker. I turned to my work, and endeavored to write, but could not; for now her mood changed to one of patronage, and she advised me upon my methods, my style of writing, my manner of living. She promised to be a friend to me all her life. She would help me to reform my rather slap-dash style of writing, and to give it the literary touch, and she would help me in my punctuation. She had made a study of my editorials, and knew all my weak points.

"All this was enough to exasperate a steadier-nerved man than myself. It drove me, barely convalescent from mental collapse, to distraction.

"'Here,' I said, rudely, standing up, 'you will not stop talking, so I must stop work. I'll give it up and go home.'

"'Oh, don't let me disturb you,' she said, pleadingly, as she, too, rose and approached me; 'I will be quiet, I really will.'

"But I smelt the odor of liquor again, now plainly from her breath, and I did not believe that she could stop talking if she tried. My resolution to go was made stronger.

"I went to a cabinet at the far end of the studio, to get some papers I wished to carry home with me. I returned quickly.

"But, in that short time, she had made changes; she had laid aside her hat and jacket when she came in, but now she stood before my mirror, shak-

ing her hair down her back, and unbuttoning her collar. She smiled sweetly as she turned to me.

"Without a word, I caught up my hat, and fled.

"Down in the street, I looked at my watch. It was nearly midnight. It would take me until two in the morning to get home, where I would have to wake my wife, and relate the whole truth—or else tell her a lie as to why I was home a day ahead of time. I cared to do neither, and thought of a hotel. But, though I had a commutation ticket in my pocket, my money was now reduced to twenty-five cents—not enough to pay for a night's lodging. There was not a soul left in that darkened building to whom I could appeal.

"Then, I bethought me of a friend of many years' standing, who lived on the top floor of a bachelor apartment not far away. With my grip in my hand, I hurried to his street, and was taken up by the elevator to the top floor, dimly lighted and bordered with doors.

"I knew his door, and knocked on it. There was no answer. I knocked again and again, but he did not respond. At last, in desperation, I rang for the elevator, and asked the attendant where my friend was. The boy did not know, but thought that the gentleman must be in, and asleep.

"However, I went down, and waited for a half-hour at the door, hoping that he had been out late and would soon appear. But he did not, and I went up again, resolved to batter down his door, if necessary. I began the attack at once, and, though I produced no effect on the door, I did upon my knuckles and the repose of other tenants of the floor. Doors opened, and tired, sleepy voices inquired the reason of the tumult. I made no answer, but banged away.

"'Tom,' I shouted, at last; 'Tom, get up! Let me in! I want to see you; it's important. Let me in!'

"A voice from a half-opened door informed me that, if I did not stop the noise, I should be pitched down the

stairs. Still, I banged away at Tom's door. There was no response, and I grew sick at heart.

"Then, just as I was about to go away, a door leading up to the attic opened, and Tom appeared, clad in street clothing—overcoat and all.

"What's up?" he inquired, with chattering teeth.

"Tom!" I exclaimed, reaching his side at a bound, 'I want to talk with you. Take me into your place. I'm in trouble. I want to sleep in your room with you. Take me in.'

"Come up-stairs," he said, calmly.

"I followed him up to the bare and chilly attic, where he lighted a candle, and offered me a seat—on the floor. I told him my agonized tale of woe, but he did not show the sympathy I had anticipated; in fact, he laughed, softly and long.

"You can sleep with me, if you insist," he said. 'I've a Persian rug that will almost cover us both, and I'll share this pillow with you. Then, here's a single portière—not very warm—and two New York *Heralds* and a Sunday *Times* that will help out. But, in fact, I'd rather not entertain you, to-night. I'd rather you'd go out and walk the street, or sleep in the Park. I couldn't sleep a wink myself with you alongside of me, and neither could you.'

"But your room," I gasped; 'what's the matter with your room?'

"I've been turned out of my room," he said. 'I'm allowed to sleep here, to-night; and I don't know how it will be, to-morrow night—can't tell.'

"Well, I'll bunk in with you, here.'

"No," he rejoined, heartlessly; 'on the whole, I don't want you. Get out and walk the street, or try some one else.'

"Then lend me some money. I'll go to a hotel.'

"If I had any money, do you think I should be sleeping here, to-night?'

"I suppose not," I sighed. 'Well, I think I'll go. You won't help me?'

"Not this night," he said, grimly. 'Get out! But I don't want you to

gabble about where you found me sleeping.'

"I left him, deeply grieved by his meanness, which I ascribed to an old jealousy of the years gone by, when he had been attentive to the unmarried Mrs. Milner, and had found me in his way. I had not thought he would have cherished this spite through the years, but, resolved never to ask a favor again, I left him, and went out into the street. Finally, unable to think of another resource, I sought the nearest square, and put in a cold and miserable night on a bench, with vagrants, beggars and outcasts for company.

"At daylight, I rose and wandered slowly back toward the studio building, to await the down-coming of my charge.

"At the door, I met a disheveled, weary and bleary-eyed wreck, who eyed me sourly, and broke forth.

"You're a nice sort of a duffer, you are," he said. 'You knew I was drunk. You knew I didn't know what key I gave you. Why didn't you make sure? I couldn't get into my boarding-house. I walked the street all night.'

"You did!" I responded. 'You walked the street all night, did you? Oh, I'm so glad! I'm so glad, Bunker! You walked the street, did you? Well, I slept in the square—thanks to your condition, you unholy inebriate!'

"Where's my key?" he demanded, angrily, 'my boarding-house key? I want to get in before breakfast-time.'

"Up in my studio," I answered, fully as tartly. 'Go up there and trade keys; and don't bring any more of your friends around to me.'

"I went to a restaurant, spent my twenty-five cents for breakfast, and then climbed to the studio. The door was unlocked, but the bird had flown.

"I spent a miserable day, doing no work at all, but worrying greatly over the fate of Mrs. Milner.

"But, at nightfall, having replenished my pockets from the bank, as I was about to leave the building, to

take the train for home, I met her, bag and baggage, in a cab at the door.

"Did you ever get a thorough scolding from an angry woman, or, as in this case, from a good-natured woman pretending to be angry? But, alas, I did not know that she was pretending, and I suffered horribly—on the ride to the station and on the train. I was an unfaithful, treacherous scoundrel, leaving a trusting and loving wife alone for a whole week, and giving the use of 'my office'—in which there was a couch and an ice-box and a gas-stove and a bath-tub and a clothes-closet (*for hiding purposes*)—to a shameless person with a black-and-blue eye, who had stared at her most insolently when she had come to the door.

"I mean to tell your wife," Mrs. Milner said, before we had reached the Grand Central Station; and she repeated the threat a dozen times, before we arrived at my house. Then, on the walk home, I, who had maintained a moody silence all the way, plucked up heart, in the effort to compose myself for the meeting with my wife, and asked her how she had managed, herself.

"I," she answered, with feminine scorn, "I was turned away from three hotels, before I finally understood your generous metropolitan hotel rules, which doom traveling women to the police-stations for lodging. I should have walked the streets, if I had not met a friend who generously took me home with her."

"I hope you slept well," I ventured, miserably.

"I did not! Her apartments were way up at the top of a big, high building; and, just as I got to sleep, there was a frightful banging at the door, and a man—a drunken man, evidently—shouted to be let in. "Tom," he howled, "Tom, get up! Let me in! I want to see you; it's important. Let me in!" Now, of course, there was no "Tom" there, so I just lay quiet, frightened to death, however; and, at last, the drunken

brute went away. But I did not sleep a wink, thanks to you and your indifference toward my safety, and your devotion to creatures who get black eyes. Oh, I'll tell your wife! I'll let her know!"

"We were under a street-lamp, and I pulled her to a stop, turning her around, so that the light shone squarely on her face.

"'Maud,' I said, and I shook my forefinger at her, 'you will not tell my wife. You will be a good and humble young woman during your stay with us; yes, you will. You will be very discreet and very forgiving. If you are not, I shall tell your husband that you spent last night in the apartments of my friend Tom, your old lover.'

"And did you ever see a woman blush, my boy?—not the blush she puts on at will, but a blush that is genuinely in earnest—a blush she cannot help. I had my revenge as I watched her blush. She blushed in seven colors—every color in the spectrum. Then, she turned loose on Tom—an honorable fellow, poor devil, sleeping in that cold garret for her sake—and scourged him for telling me.

"But I stopped her with the information that I was the drunken brute who had banged on the door, to which I added the fiction that I had seen her go in.

"Well, we patched up a truce before we reached home, and we are good friends, to-day. Tom married her, after her husband died; and, to this day, he is somewhat embarrassed in my presence, feeling, no doubt, that I do not forgive his heartlessness to me on that night. I cannot explain, and, somehow, his wife will not. I don't know why, unless it is because she has a generous streak in her make-up, and thinks that it will involve revelations concerning the person with the black eye."

"And could you not convince Mrs. Milner of the truth of the affair?" I asked.

"Tried to—tried hard—but she did

not believe me; or, at least, said she did not."

"And did you ever see the interesting widow again?"

"Many times—but she never saw me!"

We smoked, silently—he, straight-faced and reminiscent, I, smiling over the story he had told.

"May I tell this experience to the girl over yonder?" I asked.

"Well, yes; but, as I never told my wife, put the girl on her honor not to repeat it. It may help you in your adjustment of your married life; it may convince her that a man can be trusted out of his home."



## THE WORLD'S PAGE

WHAT do you see from the window-sill,  
Old Lizette?

"Tossing waves that never are still,  
A sullen sun in a gloomy sky,  
Where the ragged clouds go hurtling by,  
And a torn sail crossing the selfsame track,  
Where my man went out, who never came back."

What do you see from the open door,  
Little Babette?

"Blue, blue waves on a golden shore,  
Sparkle and glow of the glad heart sun,  
And gay little clouds that cling and run,  
And a fair, white sail on a happy sea,  
Where the lad that I love sails home to me."

How shall I judge who sees aright,  
Babette, Lizette?

One who hath tears to dim her sight,  
Or one with so much joy in her eyes  
That glory glows in the darkest skies?  
Which reads aright on the world's great page?  
Would ye could answer me, Youth and Age!

JOHN WINWOOD.



## ABSENCE MAKES THE HEART GROW FONDER

THE LATE CALLER—Will you love me when I'm gone?  
THE GIRL (*with enthusiasm*)—Oh, yes!



"MY horse knows as much as I do."  
"Poor horse!"



## THE TIDE OF YEARS

COME back, O Youth, with all your hopes and fears,  
 Across the years which thickly intervene;  
 I do not ask your hair of silken sheen,  
 Your rosy cheeks, or eyes that shine through tears;  
 Nay, though this mirrored visage strange appears,  
 Like some pale masque which rudely comes between,  
 And hides the face so long and often seen—  
 For this, I do not call across the years.

But give me back the joy and courage high,  
 The bounding pulse, the ardent soul of yore,  
 And hope I knew when long life spread before,  
 And all Life's gifts seemed in my path to lie.  
 Let Age pile frost on my devoted head,  
 So thou, O Youth, reign in my heart instead!

NINETTE M. LOWATER.



## HIS COMPLAINT

I AM a baby, eleven months old, and nearly worn out already. Please let me alone!

I am not a prodigy, except to the extent that, not having anything to say, I don't talk. Two big persons claim to be my parents—why can't they let it go at that? I have never denied the charge. I haven't much data to go by, but I don't think I am either a magician, a learned pig, or a virtuoso. I don't hanker for applause; so, it will be an appreciated favor if you won't put me through any parlor tricks.

If I have my wealthy old Uncle Ezra's nose, congratulate Uncle Ezra, but don't blame me. I may be a kleptomaniac, for all I know, but I can't help it.

Don't rattle rattles at me—they rattle me. Don't goo-goo and ootsie-kootsie at me. I can't understand it any better than I can the English language.

The pain I have is not in my stomach, but in my neck. I don't want to be entertained or mystified or medicated or applauded. And, if you don't want me to grow up to be a hypochondriac, a stamp-collector, an awful example, a ping-pong enthusiast, or a misanthrope, *you just lemme be!*



## THREE YEARS MARRIED

HUSBAND (*to wife late for the theatre*)—I've been waiting an hour.

WIFE—You used to say you'd be willing to wait fourteen years for me, like Jacob.

HUSBAND—I only wish I had!